

Global Extraction and Cultural Production:

An Investigation of Forms of Extraction Through the Production of Artist-Video

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ABSTRACT

This research is a practice-based, theory-led, examination of forms of extraction under capitalism. The thesis addresses the question of where and how does extraction take place, both in and outside of the wage relationship. Directly employing Marx's concept of surplus extraction, but further extending the concept of extraction as an analytic tool, artistic method, and identifying its aesthetic form. Through the production of an original body of artistic video work, I explore three disparate sites where 'extraction' takes place and employ Science Fiction methods of narrative, the utopian impulse and the 'alienation effect' to critique global capitalism. Drawing on political economic theory, I argue that these new 'zones' of extraction have; forced the further 'subjectification' of labour; supported continued and on-going primitive accumulation – through the creation of global space/time; and promoted the intensification of both relative and absolute surplus value, through the mechanisation of reproduction and the blurring of work and life, through digital technology. The Video Trilogy sets up a dialogue between – fiction-reality and space–time, and situates current readings of global extraction in a future/past space, where the inconsistencies of capital are played out. Extraction as concept is utilised to bring together, and expand on, both theoretical readings of the political economy, and to identify that extraction can be redeployed as a cultural or artistic form. I argue that extraction is mobilised through culture, but more importantly, I identify the specific cultural forms of extraction itself. By situating the research *between* theory and practice, I am able to represent, or interpret, the forms extraction takes – appropriating, performing and re-making them as material and subject within the videos. The research contributes to current critiques of capitalism, in critical theory, art theory, political economy and art-practice-as-research. The video submission brings together a range of aesthetic styles and techniques to construct an original alien world, which is an allegory of our own.

FICTIONAL WORDS AND TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THE THESIS

Tem: used to refer to the system, which could be described as a kind of corporate governance.

Keela: fictional people who represent an indigenous or minority group.

Cello tree: the only tree that can be grown on the Keela's contaminated land.

Artisans: a group of artists, who are paid a fee by the Tem for their 'cultural' services, but whose 'use' 'post-enterprise' is being questioned.

The Managers: a group of supervisory workers, who have some autonomy and manage all groups within the fictional world, but still answer to the virtual agents.

Agents: the virtual managers of the Tem.

Persochip: the digital/virtual system that runs the program 'Tem'.

Sidechip: a prosthetic device that enables you to access Persochip.

The Ideas Lab: a lab where the artisans go, to get their ideas extracted.

The Extraction Vans: Vans where the Keela sell their organs to the Tem, to pay back debts.

The Shee Town: a slum or shanty-town that is outside of the Tem's control.

Synophresia Nervosa: a condition caused by visiting the 'ideas lab' too much, where all senses and times are blurred.

Surrogate: a term I use to describe the 'repeating' use of one person to play all parts in *Private Life*.

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VIDEO SUBMISSION

Video Performance:

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Video performance: *Living Forever Everywhere: Induction* (2012) HDV DVD 4.42 minutes

Video Trilogy:

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See appendix 1: for synopsis, script and characters

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See Appendix 2: for synopsis, script and characters

Private Life (2014) HDV DVD, running time 16.05 minutes

See appendix 3: for synopsis, script and characters

INTRODUCTION



Fig 1. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

The Problem

The research is composed of a submission of artist-video and a thesis that addresses the following questions: what forms does extraction take both in and outside the wage relationship under capitalism? What is extracted and how does this take place? But, more precisely, how can these relationships of economic extraction be understood in relation to art and culture and represented through cultural and artistic production? I was led to develop these questions and the research from what I saw as the persistence and prevalence of extraction in post-Fordist capitalism.¹ My objectives are both political, stemming from the current period of financial instability and neoliberal 'austerity',² and indeed personal, since as a creative practitioner I wanted to assess if cultural production has become co-opted by regimes of extraction; and if so, whether art is still a site for political contestation.

¹ Here I refer to Operaist and Post-Operaist conceptions of post-Fordism: Tronti (1966), Virno (2004), Hardt and Negri (2005), Vercellone (2007), where the transformation that took place in the factories during the 1960s and the transformation of labour itself in the global North was seen to mark a transition out of the Fordist system of production.

² See Seymour (2014) for a critique of the term 'austerity' and actions justified under neoliberal governments.

Because extraction is the site where value is transferred from the worker to the capitalist, I believe it is one of the most urgent spheres of both exploitation and, in turn, resistance. This led me to ask: what are the *new spheres* of extraction, and how can these spheres be understood both in, and outside of, Karl Marx's formulation of a wage surplus extraction? How does extraction affect our lives and cultural life as a major economic force in society? Is there an 'aesthetic of extraction', and if so what form does it take? These questions, as the research is theoretically led, are addressed predominantly through a Marxist political economic framework, employing Marx's concepts of surplus value, surplus labour-time, and the law of capitalist accumulation. But equally, because the research is practice based, I adopt the concept of extraction as a new frame, which allows me to view extraction as an *aesthetic* concept and method. This enables me to put into motion an analysis of the wider social and cultural processes. The research therefore is approached from both a political economic and aesthetic angle, seeking to tease out new readings from their combination and contradiction.

The research evolved out of a theoretical investigation into cultural production in the global South,³ but soon I was making global connections between what was happening in the UK and systems being implemented across the globe. The point of connection was always *what was taken away*. What are people sacrificing? How much do we have to give up, and once extracted, are we ever the same again? Marx identifies that the capitalist 'will strive as hard as possible to raise his [the workers] output above his [her] minimum and to extract as much work from him [her] as is possible'.⁴ Therefore, part of the process of capitalist production is the creation of *value* 'as *value alien*'⁵ to the worker. Living labour is sucked up and transformed into dead labour in the form of capital and consequently:

³ I use the term 'global South' consistently throughout the thesis, to refer to the geographical regions once described as 'third-world' or 'developing'. I use this term with reference to critical geographers David Harvey (2003) and Saskia Sassen (2010), and development theorist Arturo Escobar (1995), who use the term in their work that marks a break from Western paternalism and also acknowledges that the term is not globally specific to certain areas, and in this sense we can speak of global 'Souths' existing in the global North as well.

⁴ Marx (1976:988)

⁵ Marx (1976) this is obviously part of the process of alienation, which I do not address explicitly in the thesis, but it has informed my research objectives.

The self-valorization of capital – the creation of surplus value – is therefore the determining, dominating and overriding purpose of the capitalist: it is the absolute motive and content of his activity...⁶

Here Marx famously declares that the extraction of surplus value from the worker underpins the capitalist system. But how can we understand extraction outside of production, outside of the wage, and in relation to the idea of ‘global extraction’ today? Subsequent and contemporary analyses of extraction in political economic theory have pointed to the continued relevance of Marx’s analysis of surplus value extraction. However many theorists in the Marxist tradition have also tried to understand the way changes in the technological,⁷ ideological,⁸ geographical⁹ and, the productive composition of labour have affected Marx’s thesis and, subsequently, the mechanisms of extraction.

The relocation of industrial production from the global North and subsequent transformation of its labour force after the 1960s led theorists of Operaismo – Mario Tronti and Raniero Panzieri – to advocate a move from the productive site of the factory to the new (now increasingly educated) worker. Tronti identified that the factory system had now spread out into the very fabric of social life,¹⁰ requiring new tools of resistance and analysis. This idea of extraction beyond the workplace, or beyond the factory walls, and embodied in the apparatus of the state, is developed throughout the thesis, underpinning my analysis of the ways extraction still functions outside of productive labour today. However, Samir Amin and David Harvey have focused on the transformations that took place in the global South as industrialisation radically transformed ‘third world’ labour and reconstructed the global South as a site for super exploitation and extraction.¹¹

⁶ Marx (1976:990)

⁷ Negri (1992) and Vercellone (2006) look at changes in the technical composition of capital that are directly influenced by the technological transformations of labour.

⁸ Writers of Operaismo: Tronti (1966) Panzieri (1962) identified the educated worker as a new identity in post-war Europe. This has been further developed by Virno (2004) in his writing on the ‘multitude’.

⁹ Amin (1976), Custers (2013), and Harvey (2003), (2007), who identify the massive relocation of productive labour post 1960.

¹⁰ Tronti (1966)

¹¹ Amin (1998), Harvey (2003)

Under what is described as Italian Post-Operaismo, or Autonomia a range of critiques and theoretical positions evolved which responded to the increasingly 'autonomous' nature of the worker, but more specifically the nature of post-Fordist labour itself. Antonio Negri,¹² Paolo Virno,¹³ and Carlo Vercellone¹⁴ responded to changes in the global composition of labour by focusing on its 'immaterial' or 'cognitive' character. Leading Negri to call into question the labour theory of value, Virno to identify the virtuosic and linguistic nature of post-Fordist production, and Vercellone to identify the locus of extraction in the cognitive or intellectual component of labour. However George Caffentzis, among many others,¹⁵ has argued against Negri's 'obsolescence' of the labour theory of value, contending that value is not beyond measure today and capital still spends a huge amount of effort quantifying and controlling its labour force¹⁶ and their 'values'. Throughout the thesis I will explore these differing positions and readings of Marx's original texts. Though, I do, on the whole, employ the labour theory of value as the theoretical basis for surplus extraction throughout the research. Yet I am invested in the way the theorists aforementioned tease out the specificities of a changing global labour force, and changing composition of capital, and begin to identify where the strict categories defined by Marx in terms of surplus extraction have and should be called into question.

For example, the persistence of primitive accumulation and 'enclosures' has been addressed by Harvey, Silvia Federici and Massimo de Angelis who emphasise its 'ongoing' role in capitalist production,¹⁷ and refer to the huge peasant transformations in China and South America, and global land-grabbing, as evidence of this. I consider this 'ongoing' nature in relationship to Rosa Luxemburg's idea of capital needing a sphere outside of itself to extract from,¹⁸ linking this to the progressive commodification of the reproductive sphere epitomised, as Ursula Huws and Leopoldina Fortunati

¹² Negri (1994), Hardt and Negri (2005)

¹³ Virno (2004)

¹⁴ Vercellone (2006)

¹⁵ Caffentzis (2014), Henninger (2007), Camfield (2007), de Angelis (2006)

¹⁶ Caffentzis (2014)

¹⁷ Harvey (2003), de Angelis (2001), Federici (2004)

¹⁸ Luxemburg (2003)

have argued, by the mechanisation and privatisation of social reproduction.¹⁹ Vercellone also cites rent as a growing source of profit for capital,²⁰ and, alongside exponential housing rent, Christian Fuchs explains, rent is now understood in terms of the digital world, where we rent ‘virtual’ space, or are ‘rented’ out ourselves.²¹ This led me to expand my readings of extraction to look outside of the traditional working relationships of productive labour, and to ask: how does extraction function in relation to ‘total social capital’,²² and how does it continue to function as capitalist production fails?²³

The labour depicted in the artist-videos submitted could be seen as ‘outside’ of ‘productive’ labour, especially if we use Marx’s definition of productive labour. It could even be described as outside of the wage relation. Therefore it became important for me to understand if value can be generated, or more pointedly circulated, outside of the wage and outside of productive labour. My objective is not to ‘prove’ a ‘new’ capitalism has emerged,²⁴ or to outright deny the basis of surplus value, but I sought to understand the ways in which a failing capitalist system distributes the wage, production, and extraction.²⁵ The global redistribution of productive labour²⁶ demonstrates the *global* nature of post-Fordist capitalism, but it is the cultures created in the global North, by post-war ‘mass intellectuality’,²⁷ and the move since the neoliberal era to mass indebtedness,²⁸ which, not only affect the nature of extraction but have informed the consciousness of cultural production and, indeed, art. Paolo Virno’s writing on mass intellectuality under post-Fordism in relation to Marx’s concept of the general intellect, or intellect in general, posit a new sphere of collectivity in the educated mass of contemporary labour. However, what I explore in relation to both Maurizio Lazzarato’s concept of the ‘indebted man’ and Jodi Dean and Huws’ ideas around the problematic nature of the digital commons, is that this post-Fordist subject, in general, is

¹⁹ Huws (2010), Endnotes (2013), Fortunati (2007)

²⁰ Vercellone (2010)

²¹ Fuchs (2014)

²² Marx (1992)

²³ Brenner (2009), and Kliman (2012)

²⁴ Here I refer to theorists of cognitive capitalism: Berardi (2011), Vercellone (2006) and other writers who look at ‘new spirits’: Negri (1996) and Boltanski and Chiapello (2005).

²⁵ Kliman (2012), Escalate Collective (2012)

²⁶ Amin (1998), Magdoff and Magdoff (2004), Golner (2013), Toscano (2007)

²⁷ Virno (2004)

²⁸ Lazzarato (2011)

surviving on debt, unskilled jobs and is increasingly spending time online, as Tiziana Terranova explains, labouring for ‘free’.²⁹ These important transformations not only reflect the ‘failures’ of capitalist production but also its ‘successes’. These shifts are reflected in the way capitalism has created new mechanisms of capture and extraction.

I must clarify, however, that the research is concerned with these political economic concepts through a framework I term the ‘aesthetics of politics’ – this can be understood as the aesthetic realm of political economy itself.³⁰ This term is, however, indebted to ‘a politics of aesthetics’³¹ characterised by the long history of aesthetics as a philosophical critique³² and art historical concept. It is, then, the claim of the research that the theoretical works in question, and subsequently the video practice, provide a template for understanding what an aesthetic of extraction, or even an aesthetic of resistance to extraction is, and how it informs our critique and production of art. While I do not purport the aesthetic of extraction to be removed from economic concepts or events, and much of the thesis emphasises the embeddedness of the economy in culture and culture in the economy, it is vital to stress the importance of the aesthetic critique³³ as separate, for the continued contestation of capital through culture.

All labour depicted in the trilogy is in many ways ‘immaterial’,³⁴ it therefore consciously engages with, and questions, Lazzarato’s original text on ‘immaterial labour’, which could lead one to ask: how can you write a thesis about extraction outside of productive labour? But it is the negotiation between an idea of immaterial production and the realities of a wider material production (often in theoretical contradiction), which provides a complex friction in both the videos and the thesis. As a creative practitioner I employ contradiction, or negation, as material for the production of video, and

²⁹ Terranova (2004)

³⁰ See Best’s (2010) writing on the aesthetics of the political economy.

³¹ I refer anecdotally to Jacques Rancière (2004) but do to interrogate his ideas elsewhere in the thesis.

³² See Wayne (2014) *Red Kant* for the radical potentiality within Kant’s aesthetic critique.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ I use the term *immaterial* throughout the thesis, with reference to Hardt and Negri (2005), and Lazzarato’s (1996) concepts of immaterial labour. But also in a more broad sense to mean labour which does not have a direct productive outcome, in terms of a Marxist definition. So we could interchange it with ‘intangible’. I do not simply accept the term, and what I attempt to do is assert materiality, but I feel there is still some weight in immaterial labour arguments, especially in terms of art production.

consequently often use contradictory arguments side-by-side. This contradiction between materiality and immateriality was elaborated by the 1960s 'de-materialisation' debates³⁵ around conceptual art, which were in many ways a precursor to debates around immaterial labour. What artists tried to do in resisting the commodification of their work, and the romantic idea of haptic knowledge produced 'in the studio' was to prophesise the impending immateriality of labour, which took place on masse in the 1970s and again during the 'digital revolution' in the 1990s. By intentionally conflating these debates around materiality in art and material production under capitalism I draw out ongoing connections and indeed the contradictory notion of immaterial labour itself. Which is why, what could be seen as production 'proper' in terms of a Marxist definition, only exists in the fragments, ruins, and stock footage of the video trilogy. It is on the fringes, allegorical, in the past, and retroactive. This intentional removal of 'productive' labour from the video trilogy performs two functions: firstly to highlight the theoretical predisposition to ignore ongoing productive labour in post-Operaist theory, and secondly as it opens up questions about the supposed immateriality of art production itself. The haptic is only utilised to be castrated throughout the trilogy and the space of the studio is transformed into a place of conflict or worse pastiche. The material, then, in the trilogy is redeployed as conceptual and indeed critical by mimicking the many processes of extraction, both physical and abstract.

This dalliance between the material and the immaterial was partly because I did not feel I was in a position to make videos about factory workers in China. Therefore, the research charts the labour I see around me, and what I have personal experience of. One of these experiences was my childhood in rural New Zealand, where the legacy of colonialism and 1980s neoliberalism, on indigenous Maori, was ever present. Yet, in many ways, there is a desire to depict and understand the very exploitative relationships of extraction between the global North and South. For this reason I have investigated

³⁵ With reference to debates between, Lucy Lippard and Terry Atkinson cited in *Conceptual Art a Critical Anthology* (1999).

'immaterial labour'³⁶ in very material or analog ways. The human body throughout the videos is analogous with the object/sculpture, and the 'horrific' extraction of organs, the subject and body parts punctuate the trilogy. The body is reduced to a commodity to highlight the often unseen processes by which extraction takes place on, and through, the human body. The videos, then, are sympathetic to the unseen processes of production and social reproduction,³⁷ and aim to illuminate how labour of the material kind, more often than not based in the global South, and unrecognised reproductive labour, often carried out by women, supports all that is immaterial.

In developing my own concept of extraction,³⁸ on paper and in the studio, the research took on a dialectical form that enacted and disturbed concepts of extraction within political economy. The thesis aims to develop a body of theoretical knowledge on extraction, but simultaneously, because the thesis is a combination of image/text, it serves to convey the dialectic between the production of artistic knowledge in the studio and the development of theories within historical materialism. The videos were often made in advance of the text and allowed me to interrogate readings of extraction with a new perspective, which engendered a cyclical dialectic. In order to conceptualise extraction as theory and extraction as artistic method I employed a range of methods from Science Fiction,³⁹ utopian fiction,⁴⁰ horror,⁴¹ fantasy,⁴² and surrealist film.⁴³ The concepts and aesthetics of these diverse genres are a recurrent thread in my practice, and I employed them in the production of the videos because they allow the deliberate exaggeration of form and the inclusion of 'alterior', abject, or 'future' ideas and aesthetics, which are

³⁶ See Lazzarato (1996), Hardt and Negri (2005)

³⁷ Federici (2012) see Chapter Two for a discussion on social reproduction.

³⁸ I clarify this concept in the subsection titled 'extraction' and throughout the thesis.

³⁹ I refer to both film and fiction here, and draw specifically on the work of Ursula Le Guin, and P.K Dick, *Stalker* (1979) and *Solaris* (1972) directed by Andrei Tarkovsky (via Stanislaw Lem and his other novels), *The Illustrated Man* (1969) directed by Jack Smight and written by Ray Bradbury, *Seconds* (1966) by John Frankenheimer, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978) by Phillip Kaufman.

⁴⁰ See Williams (1980) and Jameson (2007) for definitions of utopian fiction, and where they crossover with Science Fiction.

⁴¹ Conceptually I draw on H.P Lovecraft and E. A. Poe's writing, but there are aspects of slasher-horror, or body horror such as David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983) of which I employ.

⁴² I was reticent to include this genre, if only because of its perceived lack of criticality, but because of the use of standardized versions of history and 'people' in the work, there are some elements (minus the magic), which could be read as fantasy.

⁴³ *Dreams The Money Can Buy* (1947) Hans Richter, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) Maya Deren, *Simon of the Desert* (1965) Luis Buñuel.

politically, culturally and historically engaged. However in terms of the political motivation for the research, and more specifically the motivation for the production of art itself, I was, in many ways, drawing on the *utopian impulse*.⁴⁴ That is, identifying that one of the central characteristics, and thus contributions of the creative impulse, is in fact the utopian impulse, which strives to create a new imaginary – be it dystopian or utopian and this could equally be described as a ‘revolutionary’ impulse. Subsequently the production of a narrative based *artist-video*⁴⁵ allowed me to utilise the utopian impulse and simultaneously draw on ‘real life’ examples of extraction. Thus creating fictional scenarios that mirror and contradict the examples of extraction I critique. The utopian impulse allowed me to devise an alternative vision of society which functions as both a ‘dream of’ a new society and a critical exaggeration of what already exists.

Through the employment of montage as method,⁴⁶ in both the video trilogy and the thesis, I am able to replicate varying temporalities and spatialities. As we see in Figure 1 layers of ‘real’ simulated⁴⁷ life and fiction are sandwiched into a tableaux or visual chimera. I time travel *with* capital to ‘cherry pick’ fragments from the past and future to build a mutant version of now. Appropriation as artistic method, and in many ways as methodological device, allowed me to combine many ‘already existing’ images, videos, music and of course texts in the construction of a new world. Appropriation as a conceptual and material device in art practice provides me with a link between theories of extraction and wider postmodern debates of theft, originality and parody in art.⁴⁸ Art objects made through appropriation are in fact the closest to an aesthetic and process of extraction. However the new world I create, is only ever an allegory of our own, and accordingly the cultural detritus of its ongoing ruination is scattered throughout the videos.⁴⁹ Allegory functions in the videos as both the translation of complex ideas into

⁴⁴ Williams (1980), Jameson (2007)

⁴⁵ I refer exclusively to the ‘videos’ as video not film throughout the thesis, this is because through the inception and production of the videos, they were approached and developed very much within the framework and history of video art not film, even though they pay homage in part to experimental film.

⁴⁶ See Bloch (1977), Lukács (1977), Jameson (1977) and Steyerl (2012) for debates around montage as method.

⁴⁷ It is ‘simulated’ as the video used as the backdrop is a promotional video for ‘real’ working life in a company.

⁴⁸ Buchloh (1984), Krauss (1986), Wollen (1993), Welchman (2001), Clifford (1988)

⁴⁹ Here my ideas are informed by Benjamin’s writing on allegory (1999) and Buck-Morris (1991).

simplistic or known motifs (as in religious allegory), and the intended subversion, fragmentation, and appropriation of known ideas and images characteristic of both modern and postmodern art practice.⁵⁰

There was, however, an initial impulse within my practice to reject the ideas and aesthetics of postmodernism. Especially in relation to what I saw as the ongoing preoccupation in artistic practice with the surface, the signifier, the referent, or the simulacra,⁵¹ at the expense of content, or politics. Therefore I consciously strove to make a modern work of art (if this is, or, ever was possible), and in this sense returned to Bertold Brecht⁵² to do so. I wanted a way of injecting a direct politics or materialist critique back into the art object, but still allowing the autonomy and in some ways 'originality' of my own creative process to create such an object,⁵³ not the combined efforts of the participant or the wider social field. However, I was and still remain weary of many aspects of the modern project, most specifically its occlusion of women, men and women of colour and those who did not subscribe to a certain hetero-normativity de rigueur during high modernism. Postmodernism's contribution, even if we may want to call this modernism 'part two' with the inclusion of women, LGBT, non-white/western, postcolonial and working class artists and subjects, was in its identification that the canon of modern works of art and artists was constituted by an especially narrow remit of subjectivities.⁵⁴ However this does pose problems for the endeavour of the research – this being the identification of the totalising power of extraction, and of capitalism. Which works in direct contrast to the postmodern celebration of difference,⁵⁵ which has subsequently been critiqued for its avoidance of the systemic totality of capitalism.⁵⁶ But what I do stress within both the video trilogy and thesis are the very unequal power relationships set up globally under capitalism, that do speak about differences, especially in terms of hierarchies of labour. Accordingly

⁵⁰ Buchloh (1984), Altintzoglou (2010)

⁵¹ Jameson (1984), Baudrillard (1985), Foster (1983)

⁵² I refer to both Brecht's plays and theoretical writing here.

⁵³ In saying this I am very much aware of the debates around ideas of originality within modern art, and Bartes' writing on the death of the author, which are addressed explicitly in *Synophresia Nervosa*.

⁵⁴ Krauss (1986), Owens (1983), Said (1979)

⁵⁵ Derrida (1976) and See Stallabrass (2004) for a critique of 'difference' in art, and de Duve's (2007) writing on the 'glocal' in reference to the pernicious spread of the art biennale.

⁵⁶ Chibber (2014)

‘difference’ in terms of a post-structuralist reading still functions in relation to the way differences are assimilated under capitalism, not as a way to avoid the issue of totality. Therefore there are inbuilt critiques of both the ideas of the modern and the postmodern within the research.

The concept of extraction provides a necessary link between theories of appropriation and allegory in art and these same motions in the economy. But this makes an assumption about the continued relevance of such techniques within art. Allegory is very much linked to the pre and modern work of art, and appropriation, although with its roots in the modern has since become a mainstay of postmodern art. However both require the existence of something *a priori*, that is, something to appropriate or allegorise from. Accordingly because of their dependency outside of themselves (like capitalism), they will always be an important aesthetic counterpart of, or metaphor for capital. They also contain the capacity to shift with the political economic changes in which they are placed. However more important to this conundrum are whether such changes have actually taken place, are we in a state of post anything?⁵⁷ If capitalism (and I argue it is) has been the dominant political economic force in the West at least since the era of modernism then how ‘flexible’ or changing do the techniques of appropriation and allegory need to be to address this totality, and thus to address extraction?

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson explain that extraction

provides the raw materials that drive capital’s creative destruction, whether it involves mining, land grabbing, extensive cultivation of cash crops, gentrification of urban neighbourhoods, or the continuous pressure placed on human activity and life to transform it into a source of value...⁵⁸

This constant procurement of ‘raw materials’ means capitalist forms of extraction are geographically ‘global’. In this research, however, the *global* is redeveloped as a concept in relation to extraction. I do this by identifying mechanisms of extraction that employ time and space differentials and

⁵⁷ Dimitrakaki (2014) ‘Still Modern: Art in Total Production’.

⁵⁸ Mezzadra and Neilson (2013:12)

exploit the very nature of centre/periphery, or indeed 'differences'. The idea of the *global* also became part of my creative methodology through the employment of Science Fiction and fictional methods. I was able to understand the global through the production of fictional 'globes', taking on board big questions through minutiae events in my studio. I aim to represent the banality and everydayness of extraction, and illuminate the very process of machine driven financial algorithms as harbingers of dispossession, in a ritual as alien as any Science Fiction.

There is a complex relationship between the theories of political economy I investigate and my creative practice. Theory is imbedded in the video as artefact, but this process itself has no strict 'rules' and generates no direct 'answers'. The objective of impregnating practice with theory and theory with practice has thus become one of my central research aims. The task of the thesis then is to interweave a genuine concern with, and for, 'making sense' of theory through practice. Because of this objective the theoretical questions and context are both informative to my practice and informed by my specific position as an artist. The capacity or methodological flexibility of the artist practitioner or artist-writer, allows disparate and contradictory components to be assembled and reassembled by a continually transformative method. Theory is employed as a productive 'technique' or a material component in the practice, seeking not 'proof' or specific answers to theoretical questions, but engaging these questions in the triad of the studio-subject-theory. As such, within the research there is a symbiotic relationship between practice and theory. This does not infer that the process is only harmonious, as symbiosis can be parasitic, benign or fatal (as we see in Figure 2 where the separation between artist and studio represents the cleavage of host and parasite).



Fig 2. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

My objectives, therefore, are not in providing ‘new’ contributions to political economic theory, but in utilising the place of the artist as operating between theory and practice. This creates a cleavage where the discrete realm of the video trilogy can originate. The constructed fictional space, then, became the methodological framework for the research. Here I also need to consider both the methods employed and their chronology. While the thesis is ‘put together’ as a defined whole, the process of its production was anything but. The cohesive ‘whole’ represented in the thesis is only able to exist here. There is a staccato relationship between the theories of political economy I am investigating and the way the practice is conceptualised and made, and also when it was made. The studio and the nature of my own creative practice is inherently messy, and at times risky and prone to failures. Because experimentation and indeed failure itself is built into creative practice it becomes very much part of the research process. I write this along with my technical and financial struggles into the very fabric of the videos – after all much of the labour in the videos is merely a mirror of my own. The production of fictional characters, words and concepts, artefacts, props, sets, and costumes was all part of building a new ‘worldview’ and a new way of understanding theoretical propositions in, and through, practice. These

creative decisions were often made based on the aesthetic, formal, and physical language I was grappling with. Therefore the videos do exist as original artefacts in their own right, and can be viewed outside of the thesis. I want those viewing the videos to be momentarily suspended between the theoretical and aesthetic propositions, and be able to access the intended moments of contradiction, such as the removal of the artists hand to produce a work of art, the blurring between work and life, and the sale of organs to purchase objects which symbolise the very organs immortalisation. These, alongside a genuine concern for a society driven by the demands of extraction are the contribution that the video trilogy makes.

Extraction

Extraction is physical and entirely abstract at the same time, like the invisible exchange-abstraction, which put into motion, causes pain in the body of the labourer. Extraction is medical, political, geological, chemical, and literary, it is both violent and delicate, and it speaks equally about wholeness and duality, exploitation and transformation. Extraction is analogous to appropriation and accumulation, but requires the removal of something from another thing. It means that through this process what is left is never the same again. Extraction becomes a useful creative diagnostic tool, because it relates to the long history of appropriation or 'taking from another'⁵⁹ in art practice, and also relates to the physical act of 'creation' itself. Extraction has an abruptness to it, where appropriation and accumulation could be seen as cyclical or ongoing. One can appropriate from another without them knowing, but, as in surplus extraction, the removal of land, organs and ideas in the video trilogy demonstrates that we are aware and indeed changed when we have been extracted from. Extraction is about separation, where accumulation and appropriation are about engulfing,⁶⁰ possessing and mimeses. But the question remains: what happens after the *thing* (quality, characteristic, substance, entity) has been extracted? And what form does extraction take? I explore these questions through both the videos and

⁵⁹ Welchman (2001), Buchloch (1984), Krauss (1986), Del Real (2008)

⁶⁰ Bataille (1985)

thesis, and illuminate the finality of the action of removing limb or organ in the process of extraction, but also make a case for the continued and embedded nature of surplus extraction. Each chapter ruminates on a specific form of extraction, and not only considers the relationship between capitalism and extraction, but also considers whether the aesthetic form, of say, relational aesthetics could be in itself an aesthetic of extraction.

Questioning extraction led me to consider what ways Marx's formula of surplus extraction⁶¹ provides us with a formula for extraction in its wider use today. Marx's concept of surplus extraction requires the construction of a working day and the understanding of socially necessary labour time. In fact, the act of 'scooping up' the surplus could be seen as the subsidiary part of a rather lengthy process of capitalist exploitation. It is, however, at the heart of capitalist exploitation, and is, I believe, used to structure other parasitic relationships of capitalism. As I claim above 'we know when we have been extracted from', but it was the illumination by Marx in his theorisation of surplus extraction that pinpointed this exploitation in the capital relation. Allowing the worker to see his own extraction.

Extraction then, can be a violent action, it causes pain; hence the real physical pain in each of the videos; it is not as benign as appropriation, which is why *Capital* (1976) is full of blood sucking analogies – leeches and vampires⁶² – as capital draws out living labour. Extraction is the point at which the abstract concept of exchange value meets the visceral and material world, as demonstrated in Figure 3. Here I must emphasise that while ideas of capitalist exploitation and alienation are crucial to the research, the focus on extraction was because of its capacity to be both an 'objective' or removed action, and a cultural, political, or economic action. If I were to shift the focus to exploitation, there is always the cultural, political and moral aspect, which makes it difficult to utilise it as an artistic technique. Although multiple and variable I believe there to be an 'extractive impulse', which is expressed both physically and culturally.

⁶¹ Marx (1976)

⁶² McNally (2011)



Fig 3. Video Still Keela Mine (2012)

Extraction and the process of identifying the aesthetics of extraction, is the overarching or meta-concept of the research. My concept of extraction compiles the economic, physical and medical form, and its specific relationship with artistic production in the act of: cutting, ripping, sampling, and stealing parts of other cultural wholes. In this sense the research compiles and catalogues its own taxonomy of extraction in both art and theory. It synthesizes disparate sites of extraction into a body of work, which seeks to reassert the importance of the concept of extraction for a critique of capitalism. Ironically, to extract can also mean to 'free' something – in its removal, or to select a specific element, a passage, as the artist does in the act of montage or collage⁶³ or in terms of the medical idea of extracting a tumour or rotten tooth. It is because of this latent potentiality that the concept becomes useful in constructing a fictional world, and creative methodology. Therefore because of extraction's dual character there is always an aspect in the video trilogy and the thesis that resists being extracted and therefore allows us a glimpse of the revolutionary potential *in* extraction⁶⁴ and consider

⁶³ Jameson (1977) discusses the political charge within modern montage, specifically Brecht.

⁶⁴ This 'potentiality' is articulated by the 'multitude' in Virno (2004) and Negri and Hardt (2005), and here I refer to 'détournement' theorised by Debord and Wolman (1956), and Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (2003).

not only the aesthetics of extraction but also an aesthetics of resistance to extraction.

The Video Trilogy

The central component of the creative research: the video trilogy – was conceived and developed to initiate and respond to research and ethnographic data on global extraction. I required a form and format that would allow me to ask further questions about extraction, and open up dialogues between the material and the conceptual, while allowing me the space to develop very specific critiques of extraction itself. This process was also a process of understanding the role that cultural production could now, or still play in contesting capital. What lead me to the production of a fictional narrative and video trilogy was the idea that one of the artist's important contributions, and an aspect which is still needed, is the potential to imagine, and dream of new worlds, alternate worlds that could exist outside of capitalism. However, in making the trilogy I did not set out to create a utopia⁶⁵ - where the constraints of capital are not longer present, or to become fully submerged into the dystopic⁶⁶ fantasy of what capital will become, but I chose to sit alongside, if not slightly to the left, in what could be described more clearly by Brecht's concept of the *alienation effect*,⁶⁷ or Darko Suvin's concept of Science Fiction as 'cognitive estrangement',⁶⁸ where the familiar and strange are proximal and thus allow you to re-view the world you occupy to look upon it as if it were now alien. Therefore the trilogy exists as a *heterotopia*, a collection of the 'real', utopia and dystopia, as Foucault explains:

'The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real,

⁶⁵ See Jameson's (2007) reading of Thomas Moore's text and the understanding of utopia as an unreal or non-space.

⁶⁶ Here I refer to the lineage of dystopic works in both fiction and film, for example Huxley *Brave New World* (1932), Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Scott's *Bladerunner* (1982), Proyas' *Dark City*.

⁶⁷ Brecht (1964)

⁶⁸ Suvin (1979), I will explain this in more details in the methods section.

connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.’⁶⁹

The videos become an allegory of extraction through the combination of real and imagined events and characters. That like Foucault’s analogy of the garden as heterotopia combines various times, spaces and ideas within the ‘real’ constructed space of the garden. It also allows the insertion of the subject, or subjectivity into a reading of extraction, which itself is a kind of theoretical heterotopia – requiring, as Jason Read⁷⁰ has explained the combination of Marx’s writing on the modes of production, with the post-structuralist writing of Foucault to locate the subject or subjectivity within an analysis of capital.

The videos were constructed entirely in my studio, it itself a heterotopia, with the addition of some found/recorded images and footage. They developed from my established practice of sculpture and installation, and the visual imaginary stems very much from my aesthetic and conceptual preoccupation with Science Fiction, horror, the macabre, ‘DIY’, the grotesque and indigenous culture. In making the video I produced a fictionalised ethnography. This allowed me to have full control in colonising the space and also in inventing it.⁷¹ The difficult relationship, historically, between artists and subjects/objects led me to fictionalise the ethnography.⁷² Through research into socially engaged practices, I became aware of some of the main problems in working with ‘real subjects’ and ‘real people’, and made a decision that where as I use cases and examples to inform the research and videos, I wanted the content to be fictional. As with any space the artist inhabits, they bring their baggage with them. So I thought why not bring it all, and the rest, and let the ideological mis-interpretations, aesthetic predispositions, and cultural essentialising all exist together in a work that not only speaks about subjects under capital but speaks about the very process of speaking about people. All components – sets, props, performances,

⁶⁹ Foucault (1984)

⁷⁰ Read (2003)

⁷¹ Consider Margaret Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), which was later contested by Freeman (1983).

⁷² While I do not have space to interrogate ideas around ethnography, especially in terms of art – see Foster (1996), they have informed the research.

lighting, camera, sound, editing, and costumes – were done by my own hands in a gloomy basement in Farringdon, surrounded, ironically, by cleaning companies, small commodity producers and designers. I worked with student and graduate actors, who reminded me that their biggest earner was ‘corporate role-plays’, while we acted out our fates in the basement. Therefore the trilogy does not seek to ‘insert’ itself into ‘life’ but to insert life into the aesthetic critique.

I imagined the worlds before I wrote the scripts, and in many instances developed the creative ideas in *advance* of the theory, so in this sense the production of the videos was a process of discovery. I had an idea of the kinds of objects I wanted to populate the trilogy and through the process of making and working with the objects a language emerged. In writing the scripts I was navigating between the characters as ‘stand-ins’ for a more general kind of subject, and the idea of the individual worker with their problems. The dialogue became a device for setting the objects and theoretical processes in place and pointing to the wider social and economic constraints. The script, much like the objects and ideas, is a montage of my own thoughts, theoretical propositions and conversations I hear around me. There was no real investment in creating a range of well-formed ‘characters’ per se. However I was interested in creating a ‘type’ or perhaps a caricature, and this is where the work has more in common at times with performance or even theatre.

The use of non-western music,⁷³ dress and the combination of historical styles in the videos creates a disjuncture through the enactment of contemporary problems set in a different aesthetic realm. The videos provide the 3rd space⁷⁴ of heterotopia where viewer and subject can contemplate their existence without the overbearing presence of reality. Therefore, the formal and technical elements in the video are a response to the employment

⁷³ The choice of music in the video trilogy was a conscious attempt to move away from the synth sound often employed in Science Fiction. The three tracks are: Japanese Shamisen (String) Armenian spirit music (wind), and Pacific percussion (percussion). Each is formally distinct, and arose out of specific indigenous musical traditions, all possessing ‘otherworldly’ or eastern tonality, chosen to inform the narratives of the videos.

⁷⁴ Here I use Bhabha’s (2004) idea of third space, which reflects on a notion of hybridity, but I extend this concept within my practice to mean a space that exists between the subject and object, actor and audience (4th wall) and between capital and its resistance.

of Science Fiction methods and the need to produce a convincingly alternate aesthetic world. The use of bright colours, body and face paint and the production of 'strange' or alien objects and prosthetics was all part of developing this world. But the performances and props exist *between* Science Fiction/Fantasy and the aesthetics of Russian avant-garde theatre,⁷⁵ and surrealist film,⁷⁶ and in this sense reflect my engagement with arts 'histories' within the project. Therefore, I consciously created the videos as aesthetic chimera, which speaks about the montage of space and time, in a reflection of the idea that capital can time travel. I use the metaphor of capital 'time travelling' based on what I describe in Chapter One, as the way capital can 'enclose' varying economic and political systems into one remit. For example the current co-existence of forms of slavery, debt bondage and wage work, which all can be seen to benefit capital. This is what motivated the composite costumes, music, and sets, which flit between the feudal, the 1960s, the ancient Roman, the 'ethnographic' and the 'future'.

The temporal element of video allows me to produce an idea of historicity and time as resistive to the constraints of capital, and to take on board a more nuanced understanding of history and its overlapping nature through the collage of time frames. As Massimiliano Tomba explains considering 'revolutionary time':

The romantic return to the archaic is still anchored to a unilinear representation of time; but if history is represented by means of geological layers, then the archaic, as our contemporary, is one of the frictional surfaces that can give rise to a new beginning.⁷⁷

This is how the videos function; they draw on multiple temporalities, or social histories and forms,⁷⁸ and their negotiations with capital, into one conception.

⁷⁵ See for example Meyerhold and Mayakovsky's production of *Mystery-Bouffe* (1918), and also Russian constructivist sets, props and costumes.

⁷⁶ Specifically *Dreams The Money Can Buy* (1947) Hans Richter, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) Maya Deren, *Simon of the Desert* (1965) Luis Buñuel.

⁷⁷ Tomba (2013:177)

⁷⁸ For debates around 'permanent revolution' and anti-historicism I refer to: Trotsky (2007), Löwry (1987), Althusser (1970), and San Juan (2002). Although the focus here is regarding a transformation from capitalism to communism: there is an emphasis on different social forms, such as peasant societies, to make the transformation to communism. What San Juan does however is to use the example of different forms of African socialism and namely Cabral to emphasise how this concept could work, and emphasises the efficacy in what could be seen as a kind of indigenous communism.

The metaphor of geological time is important as it relates directly to the allegorical use of mining and extraction in the videos. As Tomba writes ‘a pick axe-blow can reveal...the not-yet that has remained encapsulated in the already-been’.⁷⁹ In these terms the pick-axe strikes through the geological layers in the virtual space in *Private Life*, and into the ‘virgin’ soil in *Keela Mine* revealing layers of history and the facade of the exchange-abstraction. I also wanted a way of addressing the continuous role that capitalism has played in destroying traditional forms of resistance and collectivisation in indigenous and peasant communities. The global working classes are not all created equally and, accordingly, neither are the characters in the videos. I wanted a way of addressing the role of ‘difference’ within capitalism, as both representative of the exploitative role of capital through primitive accumulation, and also the long history within modern art and Western media of appropriating from non-Western cultural forms. My previous education in anthropology had made me weary of appropriation, and I could not see how the representation of non-western culture and people could be done in any way aside from the many historical forms of orientalism, outlined by Edward Said.⁸⁰ However, what I have done is build this critique, formulated in post-colonial theory,⁸¹ into the very fabric of the videos.⁸² As Nancy Mithlo argues there are as many issues about the invisibility of indigenous groups in the art world,⁸³ as there are in the ongoing forces of capitalist and cultural appropriation. I am conscious that I draw on a range of cultural stereotypes, but I also intentionally subvert, and juxtapose them beside the unfamiliar, or the down right clichéd or absurd. The aesthetics of the video took on a political dimension because I strongly attest that indigenous ways of life (both current and historical) still have much to offer the project of communism or even at a more discrete level, the artist in her ‘utopian’ project. And in many ways the avoidance of ‘culture’ in a critique of capital can lead to as many

⁷⁹ Tomba (2013:177)

⁸⁰ Said (1977)

⁸¹ Said (1979), Bhabha (1994), Fanon (2001), Ferguson (2006), Mbembe (2001)

⁸² There are recurrent references to Said’s observations of the Western construct of the ‘oriental’ in the dress, and back drops of the video, for example I use *Lawrence of Arabia* in *Private Life*. But the concept of orientalism is also updated to include references to the media coverage and construction of Muslim terrorism.

⁸³ Mithlo (2004)

problems as its inclusion, which is why I re-stage these economic and cultural battles within the videos.

The use of props, and more importantly what I identify as *prosthetics*, is crucial for both the aesthetic creation of the alien world and putting into play the questions of how the prosthetic or object can function as an appendage or apparatus for extraction. The mobile phone and the mini-satellite structure *Keela Mine* as communication devices that have power as objects of exchange and equivalence, but also function as surveillance objects.⁸⁴ The extraction device in the 'ideas lab' modelled on bodily parts fuses with the mind and body during the process of extraction, and finally, the system *Persochip*, a small device which is worn at all times, is stitched into the flesh which allows the characters to access virtual space. These devices are never far from scenes of bodily sacrifice or horror:⁸⁵ the scar we see on Pei where his organs have been extracted in *Keela Mine*; the chopping off of fingers after Lox visits the ideas lab; and the horror on the participants faces in *Synophresia Nervosa*; the digital rupture which merges machine and body in an attempt to subsume all life, in *Private Life*. The edits or cuts often correspond to specific actions of extraction, or moments of anguish or violence on the body. But there is still an attempt to generate a smooth linear narrative, which enables the viewer to become involved with the characters and their plights. This being an intended return to the modern avant-garde impulse, where as Walter Benjamin proposed political intention can drive form.⁸⁶ For example the use of green-screen in *Private Life* corresponds directly to the concept of digital extraction, the contradictory idea of virtual or immaterial space becomes obvious and the materiality of the digital is exposed wherever possible, to show the slippages between digital and material labour.

Practice Context

⁸⁴ I refer to Dean (2005) and Steyerl (2012), and in this sense, I consider the proliferation of the use of the mobile phone and mobile banking in Africa as a site of capitalist extraction.

⁸⁵ See McNally (2011) and the 'body horror' films of David Cronenberg.

⁸⁶ See 'Author as Producer' (1999).

Although the production of the videos is informed by theory, I contextualise the videos within artistic and filmic practice throughout the thesis and draw on and contextualise the work within Science Fiction film and literature, video and performance art. Initially my practice was situated between the objectives of Science Fiction film⁸⁷ – in terms of the production of an alien world – and the production of video work, which was actively working against the ideologies of paternalism within the ‘social’ artwork.⁸⁸ The production of the videos was also very much informed by my in depth skills and knowledge of making: painting, casting, sculpting, installation, and textiles – which is itself influenced by contemporary sculpture and installation practice.⁸⁹ The videos draw on the lineage of video and performance work that employs the body and abjection in the interrogation of corporeal limits.⁹⁰ At the same time I consider artists who employ Science Fiction as both method and subject in their work.⁹¹ And, as the videos developed, I explored more nuanced aspects of creative extraction and digital labour, looking at current practitioners who deal with the digital-as-material explicitly in their work.⁹²

Structure of the Thesis

Through research into current critiques of global capitalism,⁹³ cultural production,⁹⁴ and current ethnographies,⁹⁵ I quickly identified three ‘spheres’ of extraction and set about understanding the dynamics and forms of extraction within these spheres. In conceptualising these three spheres I created a fictional world divided by these mechanisms of extraction, with

⁸⁷ Here I refer to: *Stalker* (1979) and *Solaris* (1972) directed by Andrei Tarkovsky (via Stanislaw Lem), *The Illustrated Man* (1969) directed by Jack Smight and written by Ray Bradbury, *Seconds* (1966) by John Frankenheimer, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978) by Phillip Kaufman, and the novels of P.K Dick, Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, and David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983).

⁸⁸ Renzo Martens *Enjoy Poverty* (2008), Artur Żmijewski *Repetition* (2005).

⁸⁹ I refer to the object and installation practices of Huma Bhabha, David Altmejd, Hany Armanious, and Geoffrey Farmer.

⁹⁰ See performances *Painter* (1995) by Paul McCarthy, *The Cremaster Cycle* (1995-2002) by Matthew Barney, and *Here He Comes* (2008) by Oreet Ashrey.

⁹¹ See the video work: *Nostalgia* (2009) by Omar Fast, *Nowhere Less Now* (2012) by Lindsay Seers, and *Piercing Brightness* (2013) by Shezad Dawood.

⁹² I refer to, Melanie Gilligan's *Popular Unrest* (2011), Hito Steyerl's *How to Not be Seen* (2014) and Ed Atkins' *Us Talk Dead Love* (2012).

⁹³ Harvey (2003), Huws (2013), Fuchs (2014), Jameson (2006), Amin (1998), Toscano (2007), Lazzarato (2014), Berardi (2009), Federici (2012)

⁹⁴ Roberts (2015), Sholette (2011), Léger (2012), Claire Bishop (2012), Hito Steyerl (2012)

⁹⁵ Roy (2010), Karim (2011), Eversole (2006), Elyachar (2005), Guiffre (2009)

each video in the trilogy encompassing each sphere. It was then, through the employment of Science-Fiction-as-method, in terms of both an aesthetic and concept, that I was able to put these scenarios into practice, not just as reflective of current situations, but as projections of future/past scenarios. I imagined and created a fictionalised world where three specific groups of people existed. Their existence could be characterised by Marx's concept of class conflict, and each group is subjugated to extraction and accumulation at different points, and to varying degrees. It is for this reason that the thesis is structured around the video trilogy and each Chapter reflects each video. It must be stressed that the video trilogy was made in advance of the thesis, but they do form a conceptual whole, constituted through the dialectical process of the research. The videos and Chapters do deal with disparate issues and exist on their own – but there is always the thread of extraction in both theory and method, which punctuates the videos and aligns them into one realm or one worldview.

The Three Videos/Chapters and Theoretical Contexts/Concepts:

CHAPTER ONE: *Keela Mine*

Keela Mine is set in **the geographical and cultural space of the global South and is concerned with extraction through global development, primitive accumulation and alterity.** It follows a group of characters, who could be identified as indigenous, as they submit/resist to forms of extraction and exploitation by the 'Tem'. The Chapter begins by looking at specific forms of extraction, which are predominantly located in the physical and conceptual space of the global 'Souths'. I identify these mechanisms of extraction as: resource extraction, land grabbing and 'productive' and 'indigenous' labour, global development and appropriation. Marx's concept of primitive accumulation inspired the making of *Keela Mine* and in this Chapter I draw directly from his writing on primitive accumulation, but also explore subsequent debates by Harvey, de Angleis and Federici around the

'historical'⁹⁶ or 'ongoing'⁹⁷ role of primitive accumulation and enclosures. I explain that global extraction can only be read in relation to global labour arbitrage⁹⁸ and the global reserve army of labour;⁹⁹ and in 'sacrificing' the organs of the Keela they become the surplus labouring population.

Because extraction can be exercised both spatially and temporally, I address both formations in *Keela Mine* and throughout the trilogy. Spatial zones have allowed the extraction and destruction of some spaces at the privilege and 'progress' of others.¹⁰⁰ I develop this idea of spatial extraction through the production of 'spaces' in the videos.¹⁰¹ I explain that because the compression and acceleration of time now functions as a global imperative, in terms of surplus extraction, the concept of 'global' time¹⁰² is made visual in the aesthetic of *Keela Mine* and developed as a concept throughout the Chapter. I explain the ways that *Keela Mine* mirrors the relationship between global developmental policy and capitalism.¹⁰³ This relationship takes a dual form, on the one hand the ideological and financial strangulation of the global South by capitalism,¹⁰⁴ and the other the ideological penetration of systems of capitalist extraction in the form of debt, reflected in Lazzaratos's 'indebted man' and increasingly instituted by systems of microfinancialisation¹⁰⁵ in the global South. Global development, then, becomes an important meeting point for cultural production and extraction.¹⁰⁶ This process, I explain, is ironically mirrored by artists, through art with 'social' characteristics, further elaborated by Claire Bishop through her critique of relational aesthetics.¹⁰⁷ Here I argue 'altruism' is mobilised as a force for the extraction of indigenous and alterior ways of life as aesthetic form in art practice.¹⁰⁸ Restaging the same pitfalls of development capitalism, with its inherent paternalism, entrepreneurialism and reification.

⁹⁶ Marx (1976), Bonefiled (2001), Aufhben (2008)

⁹⁷ de Angelis (2001), Federici (2004), Tomba (2013), Sassen (2010), Perleman (2000), Harvey (2003)

⁹⁸ Magdoff and Magdoff (2004), Foster and McChesney and Jamil (2011)

⁹⁹ Marx (1976), Chen (2013), Golner (2013), McIntyre (2011), Heinz Roth (2009)

¹⁰⁰ Amin (1998), Harvey (2003), Fanon (2001)

¹⁰¹ Wood (2007), Harvey (2006), Amin (1998), Caffentzis (2013), Tomba (2009)

¹⁰² Berardi (2013), Shavero (2013), Khatib (2010), Tomba (2013), Benjamin (1999), Sohn-Rethel (1978)

¹⁰³ Fine (2002), Rist (2001) Escobar (1996)

¹⁰⁴ Harvey (2003), Amin (1998)

¹⁰⁵ Roy (2010), Karim (2011), Bateman (2010)

¹⁰⁶ Bishop (2012), Léger (2012), Jackson (2011)

¹⁰⁷ Bishop (2006) (2012)

¹⁰⁸ Jackson (2011) and Kester (2011)

CHAPTER TWO: *Synophresia Nervosa*

Synophresia Nervosa is set in **the terrain of the studio and concerned with the idea of the ‘creative’ subject or artist, and the points at which ideas are extracted.** It follows a group of artists as they face changes through the implementation of the ‘ideas lab’. I identify the problem of ‘brain drain’ in the ideas lab in relation to Marx’s idea of the general intellect¹⁰⁹ and mass intellectuality as resource of accumulation. I ask if artists are a source of value, under what can be described as *total social capital*, how are they remunerated for this value, or how are they ‘getting by’ under capitalism? I consider the ways in which extraction and the exchange-abstraction both reflect on, and respond to the conditions of post-Fordism. I answer this by developing Alfred Sohn-Rethel’s discussion around the exchange-abstraction,¹¹⁰ and Theodor Adorno’s writing on the artwork as commodity.¹¹¹ The Chapter considers the way transformations of the artistic ‘technique’ borrow from the extractive technique, or conversely the way capitalism borrows from art – by the subjectification of extraction or the extraction of the subject. This subjectification of extraction is made explicit in *Synophresia Nervosa* by the sacrifice of body parts and mind, the parody of the ‘sacred’ space of the studio and reflected through a discussion of the stratagems of ‘body horror’.

I then consider if artists are also implicated in regimes of extraction, how we can readdress the idea of artwork as commodity¹¹² and whether this subverts the idea of artistic labour as un-alienated labour.¹¹³ In order for me to answer the above I develop what I see as a link between art and reproduction.¹¹⁴ This is illuminated by the presence of compromised reproductive activities in *Synophresia Nervosa*. I explain that this connection is the result of the fact that more aspects of our reproductive lives are being commoditised, and also

¹⁰⁹ Marx (1993)

¹¹⁰ Sohn-Rethel (1978)

¹¹¹ Adorno (2002) Martin (2007)

¹¹² Adorno (2002), Roberts (2015), Martin (2007)

¹¹³ Huws (2010), Steyerl (2012)

¹¹⁴ See Fortunati (1996), (2007), Federici (2012), Vishmidt (2013), Huws (2014) and Marx (1976:1038) for his distinction of productive and unproductive labour.

reflects a response by artists to the ‘disappearance’ of productive labour from the global North and the subsequent blurring between work and life.¹¹⁵

CHAPTER THREE: *Private Life*

Private Life is set in **the sphere of the contemporary working day and concerned with technological extraction**. It follows a manager and those he manages, as he faces constraints put on him by the administration of the virtual system ‘Persochip’. Persochip facilitates the blurring between work and life and is explored in both video and Chapter through the mechanisms of management, temporal extraction and the digital sphere. I explain the ways capitalism uses technology (relative surplus value) to augment time (absolute surplus value) and space and blur the lines between production and reproduction. Huws and Fortunati detail the way that current techniques of extraction function by employing technologies that blur the divisions between work and life. I address the stretch or elongation of the working day in the work of Moishe Postone,¹¹⁶ and in terms of a reconceptualization of time itself I use Tomba’s,¹¹⁷ writing on Marx’s ‘temporalities’ and in terms of art production John Robert’s¹¹⁸ concept of atemporality. At the same time, throughout the Chapter, I explain through Lazzarato’s¹¹⁹ conception of the subject, that the way these ‘machines’ are created and constructed is through the employment of our own subjectivity (explored in Figure 4). They are often directly informed by an artistic or social ‘technique’. The idea of digital labour as distinct in form enabled me to make connections across the globe and throughout the trilogy, and make a specific case for the way the digital sphere functions as a strategic guise for extraction and exploitation.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Originally theorised by Tronti (1962), as the permeation of the factory into the social.

¹¹⁶ (1993)

¹¹⁷ Tomba (2013)

¹¹⁸ (2015)

¹¹⁹ (2014)

¹²⁰ Terranova (2004), Huws (2013), Dean (2013), Fuchs (2014), Chan (2013)



Fig 4. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

Methods and Methodology

The objectives and reasoning of my methodology are grounded in a Marxist critique of political economy. As such the theoretical approach defines the specific investigation of the concept of extraction within the research. However, through the development of this concept I was able to construct the idea of extraction as an overarching concept, which takes on board the different economic, social and artistic modalities of extraction.¹²¹ Because the research is practice-based, part of the process is to translate and interpret the theoretical inquiry through creative methods.¹²² However, this is also reversed in a dialectical relationship whereby my knowledge and experience as a practitioner directly informs the theoretical understanding and approach within the research. For example, while the theoretical approach derives from historical materialism, the way I conduct the research can coextensively be seen as 'artistic', in that I draw from a very wide and sometimes disparate set of ideas in order to build a complex picture, which enables me to create an original artefact. This fragmented and dispersed quality of the research

¹²¹ Smith and Dean (2009)

¹²² Smith and Dean (2009)

(items travel the globe and back to my studio in an instant) reflects the combinatory nature of my practice. This combinatory method is seldom employed in the social sciences. My method, rather, is closer to collage or montage,¹²³ which combines a wider range of ‘sources’ in one piece of work with a ‘cut and paste’ effect.¹²⁴ This is echoed in the videos, where the methods of appropriation, allegory and parody work together to present a world that is both familiar and ‘other’ simultaneously. For example, I directly appropriate the films *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Le Mepris* (1963), promotional videos for charities, and companies, and a range of images and advertising found online – into the videos. However each cultural object is chosen for its specific cultural and political meaning and does not attempt to displace the critique, but to further cement it into the work itself. The juxtaposition of these restaged aesthetic clichés, functions to illuminate their past and future role in defining an aesthetic of extraction.

Initially, I conceived a creative practice through employing the idea of ‘extraction’ as metaphor and analogy in the work. However this had its limitations, as extraction as action on its own could not take on board the wider theoretical and historical models I was exploring. Because extraction is about the meeting point between the subject and the wider technical system of capitalism, I needed a form that could represent this conflict – a form that could equally address the technical components of extraction, and the affect of this action in the subject. It was for this reason that I drew on the field of Science Fiction to develop my creative methodology. While the videos do not adhere to a strictly ‘Science Fiction formula (if there is one?’¹²⁵), I employ many of the different approaches of the genre, as well as allowing the inclusion of other forms of fiction and contemporary artistic approaches into a hybrid method. I adhered to the view that Science Fiction is about an approach, and not a subject, this view is described by Darko Suvin’s theory of cognitive estrangement, and further developed by Carl Freedman here:

¹²³ Bloch (1977), Buchloh (1984)

¹²⁴ I attribute this approach in the research to artist-writers who employ this method, for example Hito Steyerl (2012). In her essays she combines visual art, economy, philosophy and pop culture within one paragraph.

¹²⁵ Here I refer to Freedman (2000) who explores the limits in defining the genre.

science fiction is determined by the *dialectic* between estrangement and cognition. The first term refers to the creation of an alternative fictional world that, by refusing to take our mundane environment for granted, implicitly or explicitly performs an estranging critical interrogation of the latter. But the *critical* character of the interrogation is guaranteed by the operation of cognition...¹²⁶

Freedman quickly identifies many of the pitfalls of using such a definition which then includes many other types of fiction, and indeed forms of representation, one of these being Brecht's plays, where the use of the alienation effect produces a similar outcome. However, if I am able to define Science Fiction as a methodology in such a way it allows me to include works of fiction, film and contemporary art,¹²⁷ that enable me to construct a hybrid methodology of other genres, that still possess the dominant current of cognitive estrangement. Therefore the employment of Science-Fiction-as-method, or cognitive-estrangement-as-method was invaluable. Allowing me to include aspects of fiction and narrative in the generation of 'other' worlds, which my previous practice had not taken on board, while simultaneously it assimilated an historical materialist approach based on the social sciences and therefore a recognition that many of the elements I used and reflected on had originated in 'real life' events.¹²⁸ Hence through Science Fiction I was able to combine the theoretical lens of historical materialism and the artistic methods of montage and hyperbole or parody to create a fictive-critical research methodology.¹²⁹

The use of Science Fiction methods in the production of the videos can be understood in the following terms:

1. The use of fictional, or 'imagined' 'dream-worlds' as defined by Fredric Jameson.¹³⁰
2. Darko Suvin's concept of 'cognitive estrangement'.

¹²⁶ Freedman (2000: 17)

¹²⁷ Examples I employ refer to being, the fiction works: *Women in the Dunes* (1962) by Kobo Abe, *The Invention of Morel* (1940) Aldofo Biouy Casares, the films: *Upstream Colour* (2013) by Shane Carruth, *Celine and Julie Go Boating* (1974) Jaques Rivette, and contemporary art: Mike Nelson's *A Forgotten Kingdom* (2001).

¹²⁸ Here the work of Suvin (1972), Jameson (2007), Bould (2009) and Burling (2009) was informative for linking the Science Fiction genre with the objectives of Historical Materialism.

¹²⁹ See Jameson's discussion around montage (1977) with reference to Lukács and Bloch.

¹³⁰ Jameson (2007)

3. The *utopian impulse* as defined by Williams and extended by Jameson.
4. Brecht's concept of 'alienation effect'.
5. The use of 'real life' historical examples (what separates Science Fiction from fantasy is its attention to science and technology).
6. The use of 'projected' visions of the future
7. The construction of an 'other' or alien aesthetic realm.
8. The creation of a fictional people, who appear as alien.
9. The use of dystopic/utopic/heterotopic readings of our current world, which draw on historical materialism, or the idea of communism, to invent a parallel world.

Through employing narrative, and the imagining of 'other' worlds I was able to create a fictional realm or ethnographic landscape, which I could then analyse historically and conceptually. By following a linear narrative format I was able to interrogate specific nuances along the plot lines and focus the 'subversion' in the actions and images presented alongside the narrative. This led to a multi-method approach, which enabled the production of an original body of artefacts that were theoretically structured and dialectical, which in turn set in motion new relationships between real and imagined events. I was then able to marry the practice and the theory, as the artefacts become exemplars of, and comments on, the theoretical ideas. Yet the artefacts are in themselves original works which pose original questions. It must be emphasised however that the employment of Science Fiction methods and categories does not mean that the enquiry is an investigation into Science Fiction as a genre and subject.

The Outcomes

The outcomes of the research are primarily interdisciplinary – where the contradictory approach brings together a range of theoretical approaches and examples in the production of an original artefact. There are also very specific contributions to knowledge in the expanded field of historical

materialism. The development of a meta-theory of extraction, which combines and collates 'global', cultural and political elements and examples of extraction, through and against, the employment of Marx's idea of surplus extraction, is a direct contribution of the research. This is unique to the research – as practice, as an objective, and as an outcome within art practice, but it is also unique in its breadth within Marxist theory. The research outcomes sit within materialist contemporary critical art theory¹³¹ and within the wider readings of extraction in political economic and cultural theory. But, because the work exists as both artefact and thesis, the contribution to knowledge should precisely be read as the interaction or relationship between historical materialism and art practice; and as a proposal for, and extrapolation of, this hybrid methodological approach.

In addition I identify and theorise specific spheres of extraction: Global development, microfinance, the extraction of alterity, the dialectics of extraction within cultural production and, and what I have named 'creative extraction'; and significantly the way in which computer technologies have generated a further extraction of life through the constant permeation of boundaries. As such I was able to put forward new composite theories of extraction, which can operate within art and cultural theory. While these ideas or cognates can be originally attributed to the theorists I use throughout the thesis, the combination of them under my umbrella of extraction, and in turn their replaying in the form of a narrative based video trilogy, brings out particular nuances where ideologies of creation and extraction meet. It was here I was able to elucidate on the idea of 'an aesthetics of extraction', and at the same time a potential 'aesthetics of resistance' to extraction. In identifying three spheres where varying forms and processes are acted out I have elucidated these mechanisms and their aesthetics. In Chapter One identifying the aesthetic of altruism, as embedded in the logic of global development, allowed a new interrogation of the social artwork. In Chapter Two I theorise the link between a construction of subjectivity and the subjectification of extraction. This is represented by the image of 'brain drain',

¹³¹ Dimitrakaki (2013) Vishmidt (2013) Sholette (2011), Léger (2012), Steyerl (2012), Roberts (2010)

but more importantly in the internalisation of the artistic technique. This aesthetic is then the idea and image of self-sacrifice. In the final Chapter I make a clear connection between the aesthetics of the digital interface, and its capacity to extract, not with the direct aim of demonising the digital, but with specifying the times at which the pervasiveness of an aesthetics of digital interface mask over an aesthetics of extraction. Each sphere maps out new and future terrains of extraction, which merit further research and development, and have generated a range of further questions, which I will elaborate on at the end of the thesis. Another important aspect to consider, is that the practice exists as a contribution within contemporary fine art, as an 'original' work of art, even though the research actively works to deconstruct many of the ongoing myths which continue to inform what art is and does.

CHAPTER ONE



Fig. 5 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Development and Extraction in the Global South: Space/Time in *Keela Mine*

Introduction

This Chapter engages with spheres or mechanisms of extraction that are distinct to the global South, or more importantly part of the ‘global’ in global capitalism. I use the term ‘global South’ and ‘North’ exclusively throughout the thesis to refer to the once defined geographical regions of the ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ or ‘third’ world. The terms do not restrict the analysis to a geographical one, and often refer to the economic and social conditions faced by those in spaces that could have been historically viewed as ‘North’ or ‘South’.¹³² My intention is not to cement a dualism between the two, but to consider the terms as both fluid and fixed under regimes of global extraction.

¹³² Harvey (2004) Sassen (2014)

In this Chapter I chart the multifaceted terrain of the video *Keela Mine* (2012). The video works by reflecting the social ‘realities’ of extraction, but it also brings up questions about the nature of its own production and thus art production. *Keela Mine* contemplates the place of an aesthetic of alterity, or a non-capitalist aesthetics, redeployed as resistive to capital.¹³³ While this aesthetic ‘dilemma’ returns throughout the trilogy it is important that we begin to grapple with ideas of non-capitalist forms, both aesthetic and social here, in the video that deals with an idea of indigeneity.

I begin by examining the process and events of primitive accumulation in the global South. This contextualises the film and the research within a historical process and also makes a case for primitive accumulation’s continued validity as a critical theory, which situates, not only, power relationships between North and South, but considers the composition and demands of capital as it expands into new territories. The following section considers how time and space is now constructed around regimes of extraction in ‘global’ time and space, and considers how artists have represented this. I then situate the ideological and material spaces of global development in relation to extraction, and consider its interrelation with cultural production and debt economies (demonstrated in Figure 5). Finally I look more explicitly at the ways in which ideologies of altruism and enterprise have infiltrated the consciousness of cultural producers in the global North, reflected in the proliferation of art works, which have a social function and engender what I describe as the extractive logic of altruism.

The global South has historically provided ‘raw materials’ to the global North, but although I intend to situate this debate within historical and political contexts, this idea of raw materials provides an important analytic framework for addressing cultural and artistic production and the re-conceptualisation of the social as raw material¹³⁴ itself in artistic production. Their interrelation is not just premised on the transformation of extraction per se, but on the long history of artistic forms of appropriation, which structure the very discourses

¹³³ Grayburn (1976) and Hart (1995) address changes in indigenous cultural production and Caygill (2013) Flusty (2006) Harney (2010), Hughey (2008), Martin (2004) and Clark (2003) write on indigenous and minority resistance and aesthetics.

¹³⁴ Here I am inspired by Tronti’s (1966) writing on the ‘social factory’.

of modern art.¹³⁵ An artistic 'primitive accumulation' could take the form of the ransacked masks of Africa and Oceania, or in a contemporary context, the re-representation of labour in the global South.¹³⁶ At its most simplistic this is about the encapsulation and separation of the 'other',¹³⁷ but there is a nagging presence in the 'where' and the 'who' of extraction today that leads us back to the global South.¹³⁸

Keela Mine begins with shots of the *Cello* tree, inspired by Ursula Le Guin's *holum* plants. The idea of a detestable mono-crop, the only plants left that would survive a migration or apocalypse that provides food, shelter and fuel, sets the scene for the video. The experience of 'making do' or 'doing without' is somehow made romantic in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974) but in *Keela Mine* the Keela come to detest the trees, which not only fulfil the function of survival, but become a signifier of the Keela themselves, as they re-make them for tourists.¹³⁹ Chol and Layet are filmed (Figure 6) pulling strands of cello fibres as they chat about their situation, cello wine is savoured by Pei and Chol, these 'indigenous' substances are now understood in their relation to capital.¹⁴⁰ As Marx writes:

The flax looks exactly as it did before. Not a fibre of it has changed, but a new soul has entered into its body. It now forms part of the constant capital of the master manufacturer.¹⁴¹

The way the social relation of capital enters and animates objects is an important observation of Marx's, and this chapter illuminates the relationship between objects, which belong (or have belonged) to the Keela, and those (like their bodies) that do not. The romance of 'doing without' is replaced by a longing for more. The Keela are an indigenous people – set in a Science Fictional alien space, but they could just as easily be set here and now, given

¹³⁵ Buchloh (1982) Welchman (2001) and Krauss (1986) and I also refer to Bataille's (1985) concept of appropriation and consider Coutts-Smith's writing on *Cultural Colonialism* (2002).

¹³⁶ See Dimitrakaki (2011) for a discussion about the representation of labouring bodies in art.

¹³⁷ Here I refer to Lacan (1977) but more explicitly refer the critique of the 'other' from Said's *Orientalism* (1978).

¹³⁸ Foster, McChesney, and Jamil (2011) for a detailed discussion on productive labour in the global South.

¹³⁹ See McCannell (1999), Urry (2002), Grayburn (1978), Notar (2006), Oakes (2006), and Hardt (1995) for debates on tourism and indigenous production.

¹⁴⁰ Although what the Keela produce does not feed directly into the capitalist mode of production, it does indirectly through debt bondage, this can be understood by the idea of formal subsumption, and Marx's idea of a surplus labouring population.

¹⁴¹ Marx (1976:909)

that their condition is a constant negotiation between life and capital, between extraction and accumulation. Science Fiction and global development have common ground. Not only can inter-stellar travel and Science Fiction be seen as the cognitive colonising of other worlds,¹⁴² but also, often those sent to other worlds were sent on colonial missions.¹⁴³ Development can be read as a contemporary 'civilising' mission. A mission very much structured and facilitated by global capitalism and western hegemony.¹⁴⁴ Subsequently the theory of 'combined and uneven development'¹⁴⁵ is informative for conceptualising the video both formally in terms of the co-existence historical styles, and theoretically as it allowed me to question ideas of progress and their correlation to capitalism. By acknowledging that the 'permanent' revolution can take different forms I am able to deviate from an aesthetic of capitalism or an aesthetics of already 'existed' communism.



Fig 6 Video Still Keela Mine (2012)

Marx's idea of primitive or original accumulation¹⁴⁶ is used to structure *Keela Mine* in two ways: first in a critical parody of the position ascribed to

¹⁴² Jameson (2006) and see *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction* (2009) edited by Bould and Mievile.

¹⁴³ I refer specifically to Star Trek, see Buzan (2010).

¹⁴⁴ Escobar (1995)

¹⁴⁵ Trotsky (2007), Löwy (1987), Harvey (2005)

¹⁴⁶ Marx (1976) but we also need to acknowledge that this is a critique of Adam Smith's concept (1982).

indigenous and/or peasant communities as ‘primitive,’¹⁴⁷ and secondly as an allusion to the different sites where this accumulation takes place; the land, the trees, the labour, and the bodies of the Keela. The characters in the film are caught between the push and pull factors of debt and accumulation. Chol is tied to his debt, he is in a relationship with it, “my life is here”, he says; debt becomes a character, a place, an identity. We are also made aware of the relationships the characters have with personal accumulation – having ‘too much’ or ‘too little’. The Keela are a ‘subprime’ frontier or market, a surplus population, drawn in and then discarded by productive booms and busts of the system.¹⁴⁸ The Debt that Chol has (“up to 50 microloans!”) are laid out before him in a never ending cycle and “the only hope is that they go bust like the others”.¹⁴⁹ Debt in *Keela Mine* is invisible, its oppressive function controls from within, we only hear about it through the character’s dialogue, the spatial extraction has taken place, as the “tourists have stopped coming”, and now all that is left to extract is the unrealised labour time of the Keela through loans and debts. As Lazzarato explains:

all financial innovations have but one sole purpose: possessing the future in advance by objectivising it. This objectification is of completely different order from that of labour time...possessing it in advance, means subordinating all possibility of choice and decision which the future holds to the reproduction of capitalist power relations.¹⁵⁰

Debt not only controls and extracts a further surplus from labour time, but functions in the abstract to manage and monitor the subjectivity of the future.¹⁵¹ There is no ‘way out’ of debt time. On missing a credit card payment, a friend of mine was in tears, as it meant they would lose their ‘interest free year’; it was only by a day. I asked: “but surely you can explain?” At this point I realised that a digitally created date, an algorithm, is what controls our experience of debt, our bodies and emotions are contorted by the algorithmic logic of capital, in schemes of debt repayment that affect

¹⁴⁷ Arareen (2002), Hall (1997), Bhabha (1994)

¹⁴⁸ Marx (1976) and Magdoff and Magdoff (2004)

¹⁴⁹ Roy (2010) and Karim (2001), (2011) for debates around microfinance and the global South.

¹⁵⁰ Lazzarato (2012: 46)

¹⁵¹ Graeber (2011) explains that debt was a social precursor to monetary exchange, while Graeber’s insights into anthropological debt are valid, I did not use his theories on debt, as they fail to fully accept the totality of exchange value under capitalism.

our very being.¹⁵² It is, in these spaces of despair, that I located the main character Chol.

Mezzadra and Neilson explain in terms of the global economy that

Too often the analysis of finance and logistics is separated from any sense of material effects...It is precisely this intertwining of heterogeneous modes of extraction with the seemingly metaphysical qualities of contemporary abstraction that characterises some of the most crucial operations of capital today.¹⁵³

Therefore, it is important to focus on the process of continued extraction and accumulation from the global South, which could be seen as the material effects of the process of financialisation. This process has also produced different reserve armies of labour, as we see in Figure 7, and different labour value differentials. I interrogate this through the employment of organ sales in *Keela Mine*. In employing the base and hyperbolic example of organ extraction and sales I draw on the lineage of Science Fiction and 'body horror' in the commodification of our bodies and the idea of the cyborg or clone.¹⁵⁴ But the emancipation that comes with the merging of man and machine in cyberpunk is replaced with a more base extraction, as we see in the Wachowski brothers' *The Matrix* (1999), Stanislaw Lem's *The Futurological Congress* (1974) and Kazuo Inshirogo's *Never Let Me Go* (2005); where the body becomes resource for the wealthy to feed on.

¹⁵² See Bunz (2014) for a discussion around the culture of algorithms.

¹⁵³ Mezzadra and Neilson (2015:5), and see also the series of lectures by Michael Hardt and Sandro Mezzadra on 'The Operations of Capital' (2015) <http://syntheticzero.net/2015/03/15/capitalist-operations-w-michael-hardt-sandro-mezzadra/>.

¹⁵⁴ I refer to *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly, and Films: *Westworld* directed by Crichton (1973), *The Terminator* directed by Cameron (1984), and *Moon* directed by Jones (2009).



Fig 7. Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

1.1 Extraction and the Global South

The colonies provided a market for the budding manufactures, and a vast increase in accumulation which was guaranteed by the mother countries monopoly of the market. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital there.¹⁵⁵

Here Marx outlines the global relationship of extraction and exploitation, which supported the growth of industrial capitalism. *Keela Mine* addresses, the idea that through the global division of labour and resource needs, extraction now takes different forms in the global South. I locate *Keela Mine* historically and politically in relation to three specific examples of extraction: mining, primitive accumulation and the global reserve army of labour. Although *Keela Mine* does not seek to 'represent' these events it does seek to engage them in a fictional dialogue. I seek to understand the dialectics between accumulation and time and space, which posit capital accumulation in a direct relationship with contemporary forms of exploitation in the global

¹⁵⁵ Marx (1976:918)

South. Capitalist production is reliant on a continual process of primitive accumulation and this now predominantly takes place in the global South.¹⁵⁶ Capitalist accumulation proper is also reliant on the global division of labour which again relies on the 'cheap' labour in the global South. Consequently, since the neoliberal period, the global South has increasingly become a zone of extraction by the global North, and as David Harvey argues a receptacle of 'capital surplus distribution.'¹⁵⁷ These terrains and relationships found in the factories of Asia, the mines of Africa and conflict zones, brought about by land grabs and resource wars; all represent struggles between persons, land and capital. They also provide a rich aesthetic 'material' for theorists and artists, a factor I am all too aware of. These issues I will explore in the final section of the chapter, but first I wish to address and understand what forms extraction takes in the global South and explore how I attempted to represent and deconstruct these events in *Keela Mine*.

Marx identifies the two processes of accumulation and primitive accumulation as distinct in *Capital Vol 1* (1976), but subsequent commentators on Marx have identified points where they not only co-exist but are reliant on each other.¹⁵⁸ Rosa Luxemburg in *The Accumulation of Capital* (2003) identifies that a 'world market' was essential for the development of capitalism explaining that:

International trade is a prime necessity for the historical existence of capitalism – an international trade which under actual conditions is essentially an exchange between capitalistic and non-capitalistic modes of production.¹⁵⁹

Luxemburg and David Harvey have argued for two distinct spheres of capitalist accumulation. The sphere of the market where an extraction of surplus value takes place and the sphere of the non-capitalised – or 'commons' which can be tapped into as a resource and turned into

¹⁵⁶ See Mezzandra and Neilson in 'The State of Capitalist Globalization' (2014) for an in depth historical analysis of globalization and capital and its relationship with ideas of the state.

¹⁵⁷ See Harvey (2007) in 'In What Ways Is the New Imperialism' Really New?' and earlier writing by Samir Amin *Unequal Development* (1976), and writers of the 'Midnight Collective' have also addressed the issue of the extraction of resources and labour displacement in the global South most notably Africa, in the writings of Federici (2004) and Caffentzis (2014).

¹⁵⁸ Tomba (2009), Marx (1976), and de Angelis (2006). However the role of the 'common' has been contested, as has the continued importance of the appropriation of 'non-capitalised' areas in capitalist production, see Aufhben (2008).

¹⁵⁹ Luxemburg (2003:339)

productive capital.¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that the two spheres do not interact, on the contrary, they are, as Luxemburg pointed out, reliant on each other. Marx explains that this 'initial' or 'original' accumulation resulted from the ruling classes' expulsion of the peasants from common land; firstly this extraction takes the form of appropriation of the 'free' natural resources and secondly forcing peasants to work for a wage, thus extracting a surplus from their labour. Marx makes clear that the state played a vital role in divorcing peasants from their means of production – forcing them to work for a wage, and that at no period was the 'market' left to be balanced by Adam Smith's 'invisible hand'.¹⁶¹ Theorists have further explored this particular historical process¹⁶² in recent years, where there was a need for an approach that took on board current cases of dispossessed peasants and indigenous persons. This being due to the encroaching reach of global capitalism and its affect on the people who live in proximity to natural resources and agrarian land.¹⁶³ Primitive accumulation can be considered capitalist's 'start up' fund and during this historical period we see a correlation between colonial forms of exploitation and the acceleration of capitalist accumulation. This exploitation has not abated, it has accelerated. Harvey asserts that profit from what he calls 'accumulation by dispossession' matches that of profit from the market in today's economy.¹⁶⁴ And Saskia Sassen states that the acquisition of millions of hectares of land by foreign investment in the global South and subsequent 'expulsions' marks a specific move where land is more precious than people and labour.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Harvey (2003), Luxemburg (2003)

¹⁶¹ Adam Smith (1982), also Susan Buck Morris 'Envisioning Capital' (1995) for a discussion on Adam Smith and the market.

¹⁶² See theorists of primitive accumulation: Tomba (2009), de Angelis(2006), Harvey (2003) (2005), Sassen (2010), also Huws (2012), where Huws argues that the commodification of public services in the global north is another example of primitive accumulation.

¹⁶³ For a discussion around these issues see Roy (2011) who writes on the indigenous resistance fighters in northern India, Harvey, and his writing on South America (2003), Sassen and her writing on China (2010) but also Wood (2003) who argues that this type of dispossession is not necessarily only capitalist and uses the example of the Roman Empire to back up her case.

¹⁶⁴ Harvey (2003)

¹⁶⁵ Sassen (2010), (2014)

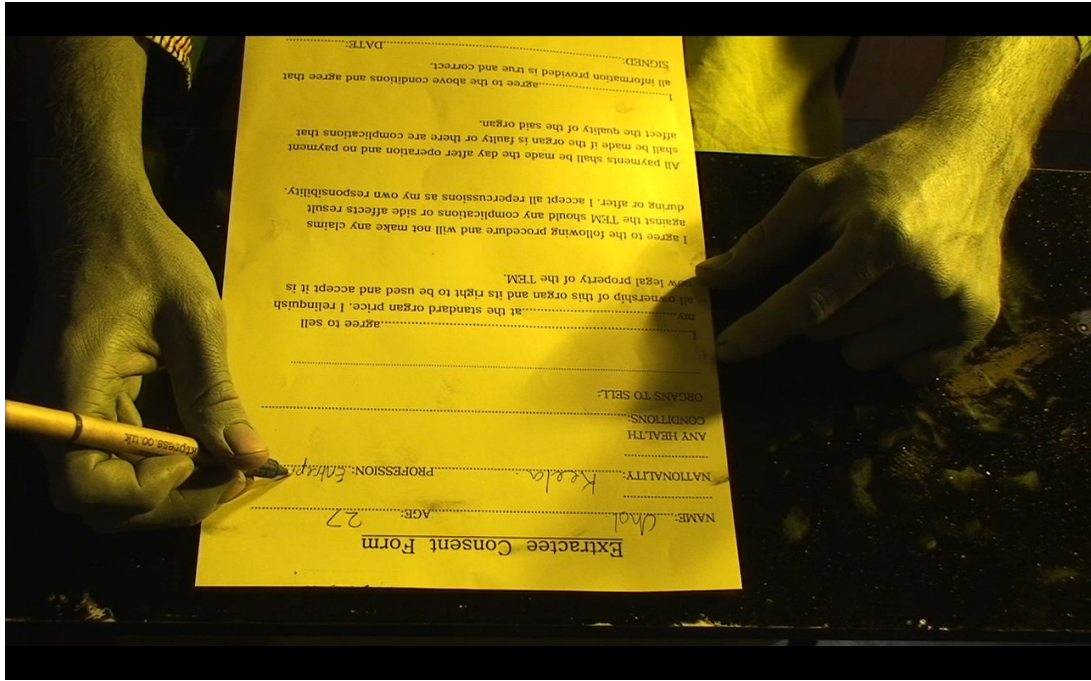


Fig 8. Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Michael Perelman has contested the relegation of primitive accumulation to the past and argues for its contemporaneity with accumulation proper.¹⁶⁶ The reason for Marx's supersession of primitive accumulation, Perelman argues, was that for Marx in *Capital* (1976) the laws of supply and demand and the market were central to worker's misery, not the continual effects of primitive accumulation.¹⁶⁷ Werner Bonefield¹⁶⁸ and Tomba¹⁶⁹ also assert the defining 'transition' in capitalist accumulation, from an extraction from the 'commons' to an extraction of a surplus value from wage labourers. Tomba arguing against what Luxemburg and Harvey see as the 'need' of capital to accumulate from non-capitalist areas. However, although I agree with identifying the specific forms of capitalist economic domination, it is hard to ignore what Harvey has put forward about the extensive scope under neoliberalism of capitalising on non-capitalised areas.¹⁷⁰ Silvia Federici has also identified the specific practices of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organisation – post 1980s 'structural adjustments' in Africa, as a new and virulent form of primitive

¹⁶⁶ Perelman (2000)

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ de Angelis (2001)

¹⁶⁹ Tomba (2009)

¹⁷⁰ Harvey (2007)

accumulation.¹⁷¹ She cites the further separation of women from their means of production and the dismissal of subsistence farming by development and financial organisation as a way to 'marketize' all economies and remove autonomy. These 'structural adjustments' were often constituted by national and personal debt, and as I infer in Figure 8, the sacrifice of autonomy for the 'promise' of financial salvation.

Primitive accumulation and enclosures not only represents the separation of people from the means of production, but of people from the commons. What constitutes these commons has been much debated; however for the purposes of this research I have used the term to incorporate both physical and cultural elements: land, natural resources, air, water, education, healthcare, bodies, and creative commons. I also take on board an expanded definition of the means of production to include the means of social reproduction. Massimo de Angelis, and to a degree Harvey, explain that capitalism is in a process of constantly 'enclosing'¹⁷² the commons. I will explore what this has meant in the global North in relation to an idea of subsumption in Chapters Two and Three, but here let us consider what de Angelis defines as enclosure: 'to forcibly separate people from whatever access to social wealth they have which is not mediated by competitive markets and money as capital.'¹⁷³ The notion of what a 'common' is, has been contested by Aufheben,¹⁷⁴ who are critical of the way in which de Angelis and other Post-Operaist theorists, accept the notion of a 'common' without recognition of the differential nature of the 'commons'. For example, at which point, are they co-opted by the state, or are actually a product of the state? While this critique is worth consideration, especially in terms of the more slippery side of cultural 'commons' in the global North; in terms of the massive transformation and privatization of land and resources since the

¹⁷¹ Federici (2012)

¹⁷² de Angelis (2006)

¹⁷³ de Angelis (2006:144), Harvey (2003)

¹⁷⁴ Aufheben (2008)

1970s in the global South;¹⁷⁵ there can be no disputing this is about enclosure, and, as such, is a form of primitive accumulation.¹⁷⁶

In *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (2004) Federici re-examines pre-capitalist Europe in an effort to identify how the periods of initial primitive accumulation were framed by the demonization and devaluing of women and the sphere of reproduction:

Primitive accumulation, then, was not simply an accumulation and concentration of exploitable workers and capital. It was *also an accumulation of differences and divisions within the working class*, whereby hierarchies built upon gender as well as “race” and age, became constitutive of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat.¹⁷⁷

In identifying these ‘divisions’, both historical and contemporaneous, we are able to understand the role of primitive accumulation, not just at the site of women’s bodies but how this phenomenon is specifically applicable to the global divisions created by an international division of labour.¹⁷⁸ Through the international division of labour, ideas of race and difference are further solidified, which reinforces hierarchies within the global proletariat. Another way of approaching this idea of ‘divisions’ between bodies, or divisions between extractions, is to consider Michel Foucault’s concept of biopower.¹⁷⁹ Foucault identifies this as the precise shift from the sovereign to the biopolitical – this being the transformation of state power as disciplinary to the internalisation of this power into the individual, as biopower, with the body as merely a biological process. Moving from a concern with death, to that of ‘the calculated management of life’¹⁸⁰, and subsequently this life has been theorised by Giorgio Agamben as ‘bare life’, as a life stripped of politics.¹⁸¹ This concept becomes important for considering global extraction in terms of Foucault’s identification of the relationship between biopower and

¹⁷⁵ The imposed conditions of the ‘bailout’ for Greece by the EURO in 2015 are a recent example of the same process.

¹⁷⁶ Roberts. A (2007), Sassen (2010)

¹⁷⁷ Federici (2004:63-64)

¹⁷⁸ See Custers (1997) for an exploration of the shift in Asian economies to predominantly women’s labour in industry – which is undeniably connected to primitive accumulation.

¹⁷⁹ Foucault (1977) (1990) (2008)

¹⁸⁰ Foucault (1990:138)

¹⁸¹ Agamben (1998)

constructions of race and racism, and can also include subsequent feminist readings of biopower, to include the control of women, as biological due to her reproductive functions.¹⁸² Meaning not all 'bare life' is itself created equally. Foucault identifies that the biopolitical is the control of bodies and indeed social reproduction through state apparatuses such as housing, hospitals and migration, which not only ensured the embodied control of the population, it regulated and maintained the labour force. This concept is important when considering the extraction of organs in the video *Keela Mine*, as the body is entirely reduced to its biological capacity, and feeds into wider debates around the bio-industry.¹⁸³ However what Foucault's analysis has subsequently been criticized for, is the identification of the concept of 'power' as removed from the wider political economic system from whence it originates,¹⁸⁴ and thus from the mode of production: capitalism. However if the concepts are taken together, and biopower is seen as another mechanism that capital can regulate its workers, and labour with, then we have an important framework for addressing the way global hierarches have been set up, outside of the specifics of the modern factory – on for example; the plantation, in the home, the hospital, the battlefield and within the body.

Marx writes that 'it follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the situation of the worker...must grow worse.'¹⁸⁵ This we see in the huge global discrepancies between the rich and poor since the neoliberal era. However, a few lines up on the same page of *Capital* Marx claims when speaking of the condition of the worker: 'they transform his life-time into working time, and drag his wife and child underneath the juggernaut of capital.'¹⁸⁶ What this suggests is that Marx acknowledges the way that spheres outside of production, namely social reproduction, become integrated and radically transformed by capital – even though they may be outside of the wage relationship. Social reproduction is all of the activities that we do in order to maintain our physical, emotional and cultural existence outside of the means of production. But because capitalist accumulation is

¹⁸² Harraway (1989) Federici (2004)

¹⁸³ See Rajan (2006) *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life*

¹⁸⁴ Jameson (1998) and Agamben (1998)

¹⁸⁵ Marx (1976:799)

¹⁸⁶ Marx (1976)

still reliant on the constant and forced assimilation of space and resources to reproduce, it is therefore a given that these spaces and resources outside of production, have been, and still are, waiting to be 'acquired'. Marx identifies how different ideological and spatial zones allow for accumulation to happen in different ways; for example slavery was 'accepted' in the colonies; but illegal in Europe.¹⁸⁷ Lazzarato purports that capitalism is not a 'structure or a system',¹⁸⁸ but a relation and, consequently, is always in the process of becoming. It is for this reason that capitalism is able to adapt and 'enclose' myriad spaces and times into its remit. Marx identifies 'the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market'.¹⁸⁹ a world system of capital accumulation that was alive in the 18th century. This enabled, not only, unprecedented accumulation, but also the expansion of the logic of capital accumulation into multiple spaces and time zones.¹⁹⁰ This 'free' 'world market' is a fictive construction which is, and has been, heavily regulated by governments and financial institutions in order to facilitate unequal relationships of accumulation between centre and periphery.¹⁹¹ The idea of a 'world market' not only brings to the fore questions about race and class and their interconnectedness under capitalist accumulation, but illuminates the ways that historical and cultural time is used against people as a method to govern and stagnate. Capitalism has 'harvested' many spaces where indigenous and peasant livelihoods prevailed, and accordingly the resistance and maintenance of such spaces is vital for a resistance against capitalist accumulation.¹⁹² This is why I used the example of an indigenous or non-capitalist people as the subject of *Keela Mine*.

This led me, in the research, to question whether the idea of ongoing primitive accumulation is about 'enclosures' or, as Aufheben assert, about the transformation to the wage-capital relationship. In terms of this research, I

¹⁸⁷ See Wood (2006) for a discussion of the way that capital is essentially a-political and this being its strength.

¹⁸⁸ Lazzarato (2012:107)

¹⁸⁹ Marx (1976:929)

¹⁹⁰ Ray (2011)

¹⁹¹ See a debate between Wood (2007) and Harvey (2008) who reflect on their writings on 'new imperialisms' and also Amin's (1996) writing on imperialism.

¹⁹² As while Marx extended the concept of primitive accumulation to take on board the global structure of capital, he did not acknowledge it as a continuous process within capitalist societies. This, both Tomba (2009) and Epifanio San Juan (2002) have argued, did not mean Marx accepted primitive accumulation as a necessary 'stage' for a transformation to communism, but instead a necessary stage for the transformation to capitalism.

have reflected on both aspects: namely, does extraction take on a temporal or spatial form? For the purpose of my analysis, I decided that extraction moves through these various interconnected modalities. Thus, depending on the location, it takes on a temporal (as in the case of wage labour) or spatial (as in the case of land acquisition in the global South) configuration. Hence I do not need to separate and elevate one form of extraction over the other or relegate primitive accumulation overall as a historical process. One could argue that time is extracted up to the point of its limits,¹⁹³ and then when time has been pushed to its limits, capital ‘moves’ spatially. Therefore extraction is only possible if space is available in which to enact the mechanism of temporal extraction. For example, if we consider the mineral ‘enclaves’ of the Democratic Republic of Congo, they can be read as sites of spatial extraction. Yet the combination of state of the art mining equipment next to 19th century mining techniques, where camps mirror frontier gold rush towns and child labour, violence and poverty are commonplace,¹⁹⁴ demonstrates a temporal and spatial hybridity. These hybrid spaces where differing temporalities occur take on the form of ‘hybrid subsumption.’¹⁹⁵ Hybrid subsumption is able to exist in globalised production, where situations of continued conflict mean that infrastructures necessary to engage workers in wage labour cannot emerge successfully, thereby generating many small-scale ‘free’ labourers who buy a claim and can work extracting minerals.¹⁹⁶ Luxemburg claims that ‘the process of accumulation, elastic and spasmodic as it is, requires inevitably free access to ever new areas of raw materials.’¹⁹⁷ This continual need for ‘raw’ materials is at the heart of relationships both historic and current between the global North and South – centre and

¹⁹³ Although I am aware of the multiple ways that capitalism ‘extends’ time, an idea I will fully explore in Chapter Three.

¹⁹⁴ See Fuchs *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (2014) and the film *Blood in the Mobile* directed by Poulsen, who both address mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

¹⁹⁵ A full discussion of subsumption will take place in the final chapter – but in using ‘hybrid subsumption’ I am referring to Murray’s (2004) elaboration of Marx’s idea of hybrid subsumption – which can take the form of both real and formal.

¹⁹⁶ Hilson (2009)

¹⁹⁷ Luxemburg (2006:338)

periphery. 'Keela Mine' indicates the dual nature of the Keela as both geological space to be mined, and bodies to be extracted from.¹⁹⁸



Fig 9. Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

In considering the role of mineral extraction in the global South Kenith Omeje asserts that concepts such as the 'resource curse'¹⁹⁹ are a direct lineage of colonial history, but this has been further entrenched by global financial (IMF etc.) 'structural adjustment' policies, that enforced policy changes as part of their 'bailout' packages. However Timothy Mitchell locates the problematic of the 'resource curse' within the very mechanisms of how oil is 'extracted, processed, shipped and consumed',²⁰⁰ connecting the oil industry with western forms of democracy, not 'southern' forms of corruption. For example the mineral and mining law changes in 'democratic' Ghana post-IMF structural adjustment, meant that foreign companies could invest and profit, but pay little in way of tax or rent to the Ghanaian state.²⁰¹ This is just one example of how global financial institutions set up policy changes that facilitate extraction by transnational corporations, and profiteering from the global South. In *Global Shadows* (2006), James Ferguson uses the example

¹⁹⁸ For a compelling discussion between labour conditions in Africa and the increasing cultural phenomena of the zombie or vampire as transformed in cultural myths into an instrument of capital, see McNally *Monsters of the Market: Zombies Vampires and Global Capitalism* (2011).

¹⁹⁹ Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2008)

²⁰⁰ Mitchell (2011:2)

²⁰¹ Opoku-Dapaah and Boko (2010)

of colonial Zambia copper mining versus contemporary Angola oil mining, to explain the key transformations in mineral extraction. Zambia's copper mining was based on a colonial paternal system and investment in copper towns, schools and services, and was what Ferguson called socially 'thick.'²⁰² Compared to current day post-IMF Angola, where what Ferguson sees is extremely socially 'thin':²⁰³ the employment of international workers, machinery, and no services or provisions for local people. This indicates a shift, in the way capital structures its global workforce: a large amount of labour is no longer required 'on site', due to mechanisation and transportation.²⁰⁴ As such Marx's concept of an international division of labour and the surplus labouring population²⁰⁵ are intimately tied to current cultures of global extraction.

The increasing global proletarianization²⁰⁶ that has followed recent primitive accumulation and resulted in increasing world pauperization,²⁰⁷ not only reflects the failure of capitalist production, but reflects the very global nature of the division of labour.²⁰⁸ It is crucial therefore, when thinking about an idea of the global South and accumulation, to address the shift of productive labouring populations to the global South. When we speak of 'cognitive capitalism' or 'immaterial labour' we must ensure we are talking about a re-location of productive labour and not its dissolution.²⁰⁹ The violent dispossession of peasants and indigenous people from their land is followed by the violence of wage labour conditions in the global South. With 73%²¹⁰ of the labour force located in the global South, it is necessary to consider under what conditions this process of 're-structuring' has occurred, and what are the cultural and social repercussions of this transition. This 'reserve army' in the global South not only allows capitalists to super-exploit workers (which informs current perceptions of 'third world labour'), but it directly affects the

²⁰² Ferguson (2006:197)

²⁰³ Ferguson (2006:198)

²⁰⁴ This by no means purports that labour has disappeared, it is still required to build the mining machines, but probably in Asia, not Africa.

²⁰⁵ Chen (2013)

²⁰⁶ Heinz Roth (2009)

²⁰⁷ Amin (2003)

²⁰⁸ Foster, McChesney, Jonna (2011) Marx (1976)

²⁰⁹ See Henninger (2007) and Caffentzis 'A Critique of Cognitive Capitalism' (2013) for a discussion around the failure of theories in Post-Autonomia to take on board the truly global distribution to labour.

²¹⁰ Foster, McChesney, Jonna (2011)

labouring population of the global North as labour is globally devalued and exploitation increases.

The *Keela* (seen in Figure 9) are a surplus labouring population, surplus to the needs of capital. They now have 'choices' they can 'work the land' as they do 'harvesting cello trees', but this petty act of production, has become symbolic and does not provide enough revenue to enable them to survive outside of wider systems of development and debt (the ones I will speak about in next section). Their 'choices' are debt, symbolic production, or selling their organs. If bodies can no longer function as living labour, what can we extract from them? And, consequently, thinking about resource extraction, I thought about how we might 'mine' bodies? In these terms I am interested in how Saskia Sassen locates the specific shift in late neoliberalism; moving from labour-power and consumers to land and resources.²¹¹ Marx clearly indicates the way in which capitalism mines and extracts every last bit of surplus labour from its workers, but what if we change the situation? What if we no longer require labour to extract a surplus, and we can draw value out in other ways? I do not intend to engage in a debate contesting the labour theory of value, as it is still the cornerstone with which we must analyse contemporary capitalism. However I do want to ask: when capitalist production becomes more desperate in its methods of accumulation due to the 'falling rate of profit',²¹² the mechanisation of labour,²¹³ and resource scarcity, in what ways can it 'mine' the mass redundant labouring population? This is where the idea of mining the bodies of the *Keela* came to me. The organs could provide fuel/food, which led me to think of human bodies as an untapped material resource. This idea has already been explored through research that looks into modern slavery, child sales, organ sales and sex workers.²¹⁴ This is not something foreign to us, now or even throughout history. However, what was new in *Keela Mine* was

²¹¹ See Sassen (2010) (2014) and Caffentzis (2013), where Caffentzis disputes a move away from labour and reasserts that capital is interested in labour in the global south as much as land-banking.

²¹² Marx (1976), general law of capitalist accumulation – that claims that as technology advances to displace the worker the capitalist's profits will fall.

²¹³ Caffentzis (2013)

²¹⁴ See: 'The Tragedy of Human Trafficking: Competing Theories and European Evidence' (2013) by Nadejda, Marinova and James, and 'Transnational crimes related to health: How should the law respond to the illicit organ tourism?' (2014) McGuinness and McHale.

the institutionalised 'harvesting' of organs through enforced situations of debt. Lazzarato, in reconsidering Friedrich Nietzsche's writing on debt, notes that the 'mechanisms of evaluation'²¹⁵ in debt have become embodied. As Nietzsche describes:

The creditor could inflict all kinds of dishonour and torture on the body of the debtor, for example cutting as much flesh off as seemed appropriate for the debt...legally drawn up estimates for individual limbs and parts of the body...²¹⁶

This equivalence – that of body parts with debt²¹⁷ (see Figure 10), is made literal in the video, and the more abstract relationships set in motion by the debt relationship are explored in Chapter Two, as more 'limbs' are sacrificed for the indirect debt of 'creativity'. I deliberately used the example of the internalisation of debt, as responsible for the direct demise of a people, in *Keela Mine*. And in doing so, reduce the Keela to objects, as evidence of the complete alienation of the subject. The Keela become object, as both organ, and in the way they replicate fragments of themselves for sale as tourist objects. The use of mobile phones also alludes to the encapsulation of their subjecthood in an object. When Chol looks upon "real artisan glass", for the first time, there is a direct engagement with the commodity fetish, as he is made aware of the value differentials in labour itself: he is worthless next to the object. It is important that the Keela nominate themselves for the sacrifice of their bodies. This 'nomination' is, of course, fuelled by the violence of capitalist exchange. The Keela pay off these abstract debts, but they will never see what their organs are worth, just as the wage-relation conceals the value of labour. Through the process of primitive accumulation, extraction and debt, the Keela's bodies have been entirely subsumed by capitalist relations. That is, the organs of the Keela have become commodities in circulation.

The operation scene, which punctuates the end of *Keela Mine* (part B movie, part performance art), meditates on the separation between subject and object, and as such can be seen as a separation between person and means

²¹⁵ Lazzarato (2011:42)

²¹⁶ Nietzsche quoted in Lazzarato (2011:43)

²¹⁷ See Marx's (2010) discussion on *the Merchant of Venice*.

of production, or between autonomy and hegemony. In considering the idea of a 'raced' surplus population I allude to the construction of 'difference' around race that enabled the destruction of populations throughout colonial and recent history – in the dropping of nuclear bombs, genocide and enforced slavery.²¹⁸ These ideologies of racism, allowed an episode such as the Atlantic slave trade to take place within industrial capitalism, and makes grotesque pastiche of the current global labour arbitrage and labour value differentials. Achille Mbembe uses Foucault's concept of biopolitics to describe the actions of the colonial state, but asserts that under colonialism what we actually see is 'necropolitics'.²¹⁹ Mbembe explains that through the formation of terror in the colony we begin to see a state of 'exception', where power is exercised 'outside of the law' and the control of race justifies the synthesis between 'massacre and bureaucracy'.²²⁰ Therefore the institutionalisation of racism in the colony, and the ongoing geopolitical construction of space and nation justify different rates of violence and exploitation under capitalism. For this very reason I chose to 'sacrifice' the bodies of the Keela, the 'primitive' population, the indigenous population, as symbolic of the hierarchies created by concepts such as race, within biopolitical capitalism. This prefigures other forms of sacrifice of bodies, minds and souls, experienced throughout the trilogy.

²¹⁸ See Fanon (2001) on the racist ideologies – that allowed these events to take place.

²¹⁹ Mbembe (2003)

²²⁰ Mbembe (2003:21)



Fig 10 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

1.2 Space/Time in *Keela Mine*

I will now consider how time and space are constructed to aid extraction, but note, conversely, that capital space and time also contains revolutionary potential, and what I call 'global' space and time has a specific aesthetic form. Meaning that often artists have attempted to re-construct questions around global time and global space, in works which simulate or represent what it means to live under the compression of global time and space, although, ironically, often the art of 'documenting' 'realities' re-engages the very processes of compression and acceleration resulting in a further extraction. This is why, through the use of non-linear Science-Fictional historical time, in the video trilogy, I am able to call into question the representation of 'capitalist realism' and the aesthetics of acceleration, by evoking the idea of an a-historical revolution.²²¹ Timelessness can also be understood in relation to capital-time or abstract-time, so employing time differentials as method is both appropriative of capital, and an attempt to slip

²²¹ This has been criticised as it occludes the idea of a peasant revolution, an indigenous revolution or as has been widely contested a bourgeois revolution. However with the rise of social movements and 'revolutions' in years since the 2008 economic crisis, this idea has new weight, even if notably widely criticised. I am not arguing for a total transformation of the revolution from the site of production, but opening up the question of where the sites of resistance now need to be in the face of changing relations and the distribution of production.

through the logic of extraction. If we ask how time-as-measure is employed in differing global temporal zones, we find that the answers often revolve around the sacrifices made by those giving up 'their time', not of capital's time. This leads us to ask, as Tomba has, 'how the different temporalities of the class-struggle interact among themselves and with the time of capital.'²²² The video trilogy, like capital, moves through space and time and does not discriminate. This 'time travelling' function can consequently be employed as resistive to capital, as indigenous or peasant consciousness can be deployed as a force of resistance 'outside' of chronological time. By allowing multiplicities in time and space, I allude to the ways that global capitalism has created 'pockets' in space and time, in the global South, in a-temporal 'enclaves'. Capitalism has 'structured' the global space/time in line with a logic of accumulation. As capitalism encroaches on our lived space and time, I ask, can atemporality/aspatiality function as a zone of resistance by refusing the adhere to the capitalist time-as-measure standard of value, and if so how does this function in *Keela Mine*?

Capitalist accumulation moves through temporal and spatial zones to extract what it needs, assuming like a time/space traveller, many shapes and forms to get what it needs. In many ways the fossil fuels on which capital now relies are an appropriate metaphor, as Mitchell explains 'fossil fuels are forms of energy in which great quantities of space and time, as it were, have been compressed into concentrated form'.²²³ The spatial constructs within global capitalism, such as nation or trade zones, allow capital to extend its temporal control even deeper. For example factories based in the global South that exist in spatial zones where regulations are not in place, can extend the working day without limits. Space is consistently addressed in the video trilogy; from creating 'new' spaces in the video – both physical and virtual – to the way bodies are confronted or confined by the impositions of the faceless or 'space-less' state 'the Tem'. Each video maps out a specific space/time, but in their interconnectedness and discontinuity, I try to envisage the dynamics of global class struggle. Each exists and is thus framed by the

²²² Tomba (2013:160)

²²³ Mitchell (2011:15)

other in relationship to what it is not. Space and its control are linked to power and hierarchies within the videos, where space becomes 'commons' and exists in relation to being 'enclosed' or not.

Because capitalism destroys 'space through the acceleration of time'²²⁴ the video trilogy does not try and recreate this accelerationism.²²⁵ It therefore often appears 'retro' or stagnant as opposed to futuristic or fast moving. This in no way reflects a desire to 'regress' in terms of a romantic idea of craft²²⁶ or cultural purity. Technology is active in the work, but the way in which the videos have been composed speaks about a limited or problematic time or problematic history with technology.²²⁷ If we begin to consider the idea of a 'permanent revolution'²²⁸ and 'combined and uneven development'²²⁹ we can see that this concept is useful as it firstly acknowledges the different temporalities that exist under capitalism and, secondly, as it does not relegate societies who have not made the 'transition' to capitalism proper as a-revolutionary.²³⁰ The idea of what 'combined and uneven development' means for global capitalism has been important for me in locating ideas of 'development' and revolution within a non-linear framework. It also allows me to further consider the role of the peasant, or an indigenous class, in the functioning of capitalism and to consider how social forms of indigenous collectivity, could be redeployed in developing strategies of resistance. Tomba explains that Marx's letters to the Russian publication *Otechestvennyye Zapiski*, mark a consideration and avocation of a possible revolutionary transition from peasantry to communism in Marx's thinking.²³¹ Michael Löwy also locates this advocacy in Marx and Engels writing and explains that Trotsky fully developed this line of thought in his concept of permanent revolution.²³² By employing this concept of permanent revolution,

²²⁴ Tomba (2013)

²²⁵ See Noys (2014) for a critique of accelerationism within capitalism and also its cultural counterparts.

²²⁶ Here I refer tentatively to the anti-technological ideas put forward by John Ruskin and William Morris.

²²⁷ Benjamin *On the Concept of History* (2006) 'if one asks with whom the adherents of historicism actually empathize. The answer is inevitable: with the victor'.

²²⁸ Trotsky (2007)

²²⁹ Here I refer to Löwy's (1984), where he explores Trotsky's concept of a permanent revolution (1931), this has subsequently been discussed by Chibber (2013) and Tomba (2013) who try and grapple with how revolution in the global South has been understood, specifically in terms of time.

²³⁰ See Jameson's discussion on Bloch and the idea of including cultural forms from 'pre-capitalist' or 'primitive arts', which contrasted with Lukács' limitation of culture to the realist novel in *Aesthetics and Politics* (1977).

²³¹ Tomba: (2009:170)

²³² Löwy (1987)

I was able to emancipate the aesthetics of 'difference' from their current place within identity politics. If societies before capitalism contain the potential to transform to communism, then they exist as a source of both social and political strategy that can both resist capital and provide a model for what forms communism could take. They, in short, contain a utopian impulse, even, if only because they exist in a time/space where the laws of capitalist exchange don't exist. Because, for me, indigenous aesthetics contained referents to alternative ways of being, or lives before, or after capital, they always stood in place against capital not for it. For this, I looked back to political movements²³³ that embraced 'indigenous aesthetics' and social forms as a template for struggle, which directly informed the approach and aesthetics of the trilogy.²³⁴ Indigenous aesthetics can be defined as pre-contact material and social cultures and their formations, which take on both an immaterial and material form. This desire to 'regress' is by no means a romantic escape to the past, but part of mobilising alterity against capital, to counteract the ongoing encapsulation project within the cultural industries of appropriating all 'culture' into consumable commodities.

²³³ San Juan (2004) writes on 'post-colonialism and the problematic of uneven development' (2004) where he uses the example of Cabral who redeploys culture as force in his vision as revolutionary in Bissau. We can also consider the global Black Panther movement, the Zapatista movement, Maoist Rebels in Northern India and Mujeres Creando – all could be seen as indigenous or peasant movements which sought to draw on a collective aesthetic/cultural identity.

²³⁴ See Caygill (2013) Flusty (2006) Harney (2010), Hughey (2008), Martin (2004) and Clark (2003) for writing on indigenous and minority resistance and aesthetics. See Castronova (2007) for the antidote to this the 'global' corporate aesthetic, which dominates global capitalism.



Fig 11 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Because video has a temporal dimension, it allowed me to construct fictional spaces, which exist outside and inside of history simultaneously. This allowed me to engage with ideas of time and history in relation to both ideas of permanent revolution, and the way capital encapsulates different temporalities into its remit. Montage-as-method allows a historical approach which does not directly represent history in successive or progressive modes and offers ‘pieces of the future that are encapsulated in the past.’²³⁵ This method enabled the envisioning of the world that the videos occupy. Hito Steyerl asks in *The Articulation of Protest* (2012): ‘what happens, then, if we conversely relate a form of artistic production, namely the theory of montage, to the field of politics?’ I have reversed this question by asking what happens when you apply politics to the field of representation? How can a practice of montage – which Steyerl claims is a common ‘technique’ of commercial film – be employed to question ideas of space and time under global capitalism? Montage is made political, or politics are deconstructed through montage in the videos by employing not ‘fragments’ of ‘real’ time but re-making

²³⁵ Tomba (2013:VIII)

fictionalised readings of history – which speaks of the fallacy of representing ‘real’ life.²³⁶

Therefore, there is a part of the Keela, in their costume and labour, that I made specifically feudal (see Figure 11). I was interested in the way Science Fiction can move through time without discriminating any laws of progression, and in a sense this can be read as a reaction against ‘stagist’ development. It therefore becomes possible for the Keela to exist as peasants living in a late capitalist world, with problems faced by contemporary precariat workers. Similarly, Omar Fast’s Video installation *Nostalgia* (2009) employs varying alternative and temporal ‘realities’ that reflect on the life of a West African asylum seeker in Britain. Fast contrasts an interview with the asylum seeker with an alternate ‘future’ model where the situation is reversed and a group of British asylum seekers seeks refuge in Africa. While Fast’s video is at times too simplistic – in its reversal – what he achieves is a convincing deconstruction of space and time through the montage of historical knowledge. The way he uses a 1970s aesthetic, projected into a future or past space, employs the idea of a projected ethnography which models potential futures and thus disturbs chronological time.

Time under capitalism is not however purely historical, and Alfred Sohn-Rethel explains under the exchange abstraction that ‘time and space assume thereby that character of absolute historical timelessness and universality.’²³⁷ This incidentally, frees them from the baggage of history, but not from the pressures of the law of value.²³⁸ John Roberts addresses what he sees as ‘time-as-substance’ in art praxis, arguing that it is not art’s relationship with political praxis that posits it as revolutionary but ‘its emancipatory *withdrawal* from the logic of the commodity’s temporal compression and acceleration.’²³⁹ Roberts asserts, that the ‘unfinished’ project of art as research enables a

²³⁶ Lukács ‘Realism in the Balance’ (1977) for a discussion around montage as method. While Lukács is critical of the method, there are some revelations which were helpful in understanding the capacity of montage to replicate a ‘capitalist realism’ but also to deny the viewer any engagement with the image as a unified object.

²³⁷ Sohn-Rethel (1978:49)

²³⁸ Henninger (2007), Caffentzis (2013)

²³⁹ Roberts (2015b:40)

'temporal obstinacy',²⁴⁰ where art is 'both behind and in advance of the political process.'²⁴¹ In making a fictional space in the videos that is outside of time, I not only employ time-as-subject in the combined disavowal and inclusion of history as subject and method. But I reflect on the ways that art can employ 'temporal obstinacy',²⁴² to refute time and history, as control through global temporal constructions. The employment of a concept of 'untimeliness or atemporality'²⁴³ enables, on the one hand, a re-reading of global 'histories' and, on the other, posits contemporary art praxis as resistive to the continual pressures of time-as-measure or extractive-time. There is, however, a slowing down or conversely a marked 'now time' which stands in contrast to what Sohn-Rethel identifies as historical timelessness in the video trilogy, which situates the exchange abstraction in conflict with the working class. There is a contradiction here therefore, when we think about indigenous time or cultural specificities outside of capital: they can be seen to be 'set in time' and the opposite of the atemporal. What might be seen as the indigenous model of resistance's weakness, is its specificity. It's too easily co-opted by capital-time.²⁴⁴ This co-option is considered in Figure 12, where Chol is seduced by the specificity of the art-object, which has lost its use-value, and consequently only functions for its cultic value. Therefore in the video trilogy cultural and historical specificities merge and crumble through aesthetic and technical layering, which could be seen as making them 'un-co-optable'.²⁴⁵

In Mark Boulos's installation *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (2008) we see a visual dialogue between the abstract world of fictitious trading on Wall Street and the 'real life' scenarios of local resistance fighters in the Niger Delta. At its most complex it 'illuminates' a connection between 'profit' in the global North and resource exploitation in the global South.²⁴⁶ However we must be careful in setting up dichotomies between global North/South and

²⁴⁰ Roberts (quoting Negt and Kluge) (2015b:41)

²⁴¹ Roberts (2015b)

²⁴² Roberts (2015b)

²⁴³ Roberts (2015b)

²⁴⁴ Mithlo (2004) and Meeuf (2007)

²⁴⁵ Here I consider whether the de-materialisation of an object, does make it less co-optable?

²⁴⁶ However artist Renzo Martens is critical of what he sees as the obvious dichotomy between good and bad, which makes it easier for the spectator to 'side with the good guys'. See Martens conversation with Artur Zmijewski published in *Forget Fear: 7th Berlin Biennale* (2012).

Modern/primitive – as Boulos does, by separating the two videos. It must be acknowledged that the abstract nature of finance capital was able to have ‘real life’ effects on those who lost their homes due to the ‘sub-prime’ crisis in the global North. Boulos however focuses on the ‘real’ life ‘subaltern’ practices of those at the fringes of extraction. The intended contrast between techno-capitalism’s abstract worlds of trading and the indigenous ‘superstitious’ practices of violence and witchcraft reinforces a separation between these two worlds. There is no real investment in conveying how the two are related, or in translating the violence felt by fictitious capital across the globe.²⁴⁷



Fig12. Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Boulos’s work also raises issues around ethnography and representation, and fits into what Angela Dimitrakaki has termed ‘post-documentary practice.’²⁴⁸ This post-documentary practice often ignores previous video and film, which sought to subvert the regimes of representation in the ethnographic documentary.²⁴⁹ The extractive logic of a regime of visibility in post-documentary practice uses familiar languages and formats to coerce

²⁴⁷ Demos (2013)

²⁴⁸ Dimitrakaki (2012)

²⁴⁹ See *Les Maîtres Fous* (1955) by Jean Rouch, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1988) by Trinh T Minh Ha, *Mise-En-Scène* (1995) Renée Green and *San Soleil* (1983) by Chris Marker

'feeling' from the viewer – as opposed to the work *Naked Spaces* (1985) by Trinh T Minh Ha, where the economy of images and the neo-colonialism of the African subject, is brought into question through the anti-documentary style. Dimitrakaki critiques what she sees as the further re-exploitation of the black male proletariat body, in contemporary art through documentary film, which uses labour and production in the global South as its subject.²⁵⁰ She suggests that a further surplus is being extracted from the labour through its circulation in exhibitions:

first, corporations directly appropriating the workers' production extract surplus value; then the artist/the curator/ the collector appropriating the workers' production as image extracts surplus value.²⁵¹

Dimitrakaki explains that works such as Steve McQueen's *Gravesend* (2007) further problematise the relationship between black male labourers in the global South and viewers in global North galleries. The work's intended humanistic plea for the 'bad' conditions, which those 'out there' suffer 'backfires conceptually and sadly makes oppression seem fashionably exotic.'²⁵² The techno-separation of the gallery and miners serves to aestheticise and de-contextualise the labour. The constraints that technocapitalism and representation imposes on 'bare life'²⁵³ are not illuminated by the film but codified. 'Real' life becomes an antithesis of the real through the documentary lens, and in silence we re-objectify the black male body and physical labour – which further separates it from the coltan reliant screen on which we view them. In Pieter Hugo's staged high-resolution photographs we see a contemporary reading of 'raced' bodies in the 'wasteland' of Agbogbloshie market.²⁵⁴ The photographs use this 'wasteland' in Nigeria, where old computers go to die as subject and Hugo restages workers as Science Fiction characters by adding props and special effects to the 'in situ' images. The images ironically reinvigorate the abysmal space of technocapitalism's by-products – what could be called 'end-time aesthetics.'

²⁵⁰ Dimitrakaki (2011)

²⁵¹ Dimitrakaki (2013:189)

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Agamben (1998)

²⁵⁴ See Demos (2013) for a discussion of Hugo's work.

In doing so, they re-entrench ideas of poor black Africa, and make no reference to where these electronics, have been either made or more importantly used. They celebrate spaces of non-reproduction by indulging in what Steven Shaviro has identified as 'accelerationist aesthetics',²⁵⁵ a cultural product of our time in 'crisis', that, like the religious sublime draws on apocalyptic rhetoric without questioning the cause. Hugo's photographs draw on the currency of 'end times' and in line with the television series *The Walking Dead* (2010), employs fantasy abjection to simulate the real exploitation bodies experience under techno-capitalism.

Steyerl's 'poor image'²⁵⁶ could be seen as working in direct contrast to the high-resolution screens and images used by McQueen, Boulos and Hugo. The 'unseeable' pixilated jpeg, Steyerl argues, resists the regime of visibility under capitalism, and I ask therefore could not a 'poor image' of 'poor' conditions be more reflective of the opacity of global labour relations than a high resolution image? In the film *Blood in the Mobile* (2010), directed by Frank Poulsen, we see how hard it is to get a 'good image' of coltan mining, the darkness, and refusal by the miners to be filmed, ensuring this. This lead me to ask a direct question, like Dimitrakaki: if the continual representation of 'extraction' in the global South does lead to a further extraction, why are artists making high-resolution narrative documentaries which replicate the very regime of extraction-financialisation that they seek to critique? My video trilogy, then, could be read as anti-documentary or anti-realist.²⁵⁷ Not because I advocate an avoidance of politics in the image, or want to 'entertain' the viewer – but because I sought to project the struggles and experiences of the 'global' subject onto the 3rd space of the video. Artwork which illuminates the 'invisible' or in more ways 'alien' process of industrial labour to an audience whose labour is immaterial,²⁵⁸ already makes a pastiche of such labour. This is why, as opposed to the singular 'ethnographic' representations of the 'other', we see in these de-

²⁵⁵ Shaviro (2013)

²⁵⁶ Steyerl (2012)

²⁵⁷ Here I refer to the tropes of the 'real' in art practice more than the long history of realism in film and documentary practice, which work by requiring the audience to 'labour' in viewing to work. The 'real' has like many other filmic or literary devices been regurgitated in mass media as reality television, pornography mainstream documentary and social media. It was this real I sought to escape from.

²⁵⁸ Dimitrakaki (2013)

contextualised and objectivised high-resolution images, I make explicit reference to the performativity of material labour throughout the trilogy, and implicate the Western viewer through fragments of the familiar.

For example mineral extraction and mining are utilised as productive referent in *Keela Mine* and the final video *Private Life*. These 'real' events that inform the research are important to forming a contextual framework, but the use of mineral 'extraction' becomes allegorical, in that it enables a synthesis of the physical and abstract elements of capitalism. In employing a new regime of images and narrative, the videos don't try to 'represent capitalism',²⁵⁹ by turning the lens onto the 'real' bodies of those who are currently experiencing primitive accumulation. Instead, I try to re-create a serious parody of 'already existing capitalism', adopting techniques used by popular culture to 'stand for' both otherness and dominance, in turn capturing the past/future social relations where an abstract idea of capital continues to prevail. The 'failure' of representing capitalism is built into the videos through the fantastical and absurdist aesthetics that embody an idea of a failure of ideas of 'otherness'. In *Keela Mine* the land is post-mined, and in a literal exploration, the bodies of the characters are mined. Just as in *Private Life* where I make the comparison between digital and physical labour by juxtaposing a body wielding a pickaxe with a virtual fabric of digital space.

²⁵⁹ For a debate on the role of representation and capitalism See Chto Delat (2012) 'In Defense of Representation' *Newspaper of the Engaged Platform* Vol 10-34 and Buck- Morris (1995).

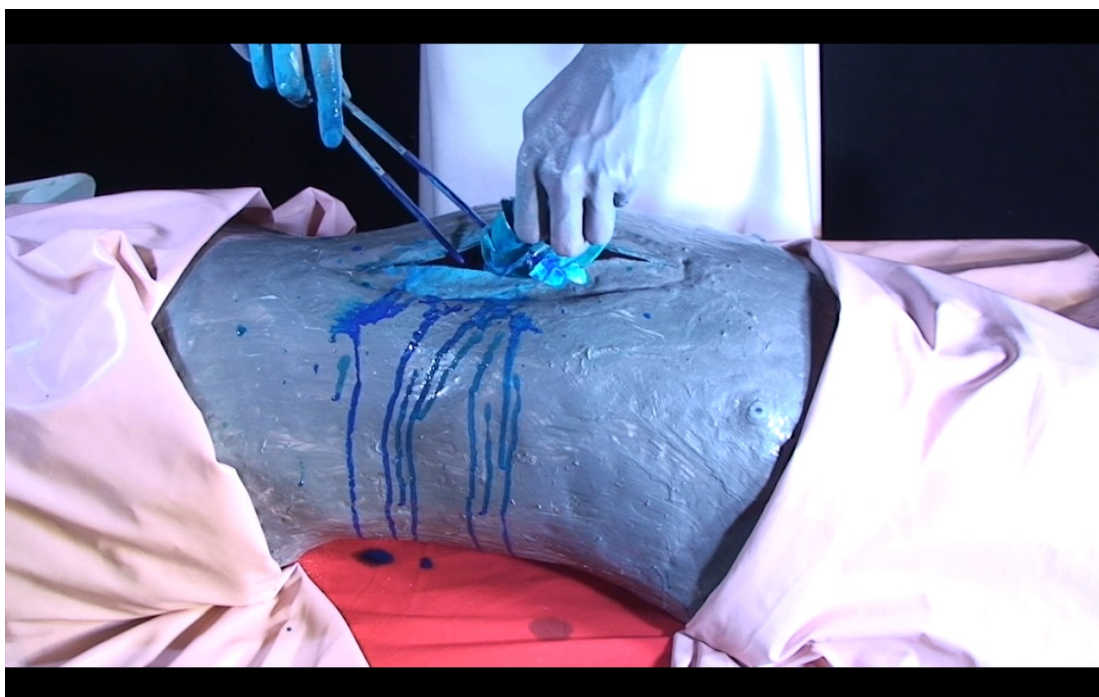


Fig 13 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Mezzadra and Neilson explain how space is altered by finance through logistics and commodity prices, in a cycle where logistical co-ordination animates the need for a supply chain of minerals.²⁶⁰ This cycle: financial algorithms – commodity prices – mineral extraction – human labour – and back, in no particular order, creates new networks of labour and control. The social relationships intermeshed in these global networks can be seen in *Keela Mine* when Chol and Pei meet. They engage with each other on varying levels; Pei tries to buy something using credit from his mobile, but after being dismissed offers something for free, to his friend (an exchange outside of capital). This cycle is then further advanced, when Chol is fascinated by the objects that Pei has brought using his 'credit', and the circulation of minerals and labour is brought into play again. Only to be finally rebutted by the indigenous wine that is 'pre-contaminated' (by capital). It became important then, in *Keela Mine*, to locate a moment in space and time where the multifarious zones of accumulation and subsumption are illuminated through social relationships – both inside and outside of capital. For example, the environment around mining and resource extraction often

²⁶⁰ Mezzadra and Neilson (2013)

creates a new 'non place',²⁶¹ or what could be seen as a post-apocalyptic Science Fictional space, created by the penetration of hi-tech industrial machines on the landscape. Therefore this very physical presence through the 'invisible' hand of destruction and exploitation as 'silent compulsion' is crucial to the current global supply chain, which is why it comprises the 'back drop' for *Keela Mine*.

1.3 Global Development and Cultural Production: The Extractive Logic of Altruism

Global development²⁶² can be understood as an apparatus for accumulation and extraction. As such global development further reinforces the strong hold of capital in non-capitalised or indigenous spaces through a two-fold process. It firstly justifies and sanctions economic liberalisation in the global South and secondly it exports ideas of neoliberal enterprise culture and finance.²⁶³ Global development has extracted 'culture' to be re-deployed as entrepreneurialism as a 'way out' of poverty, while neoliberal forms of commerce such as tourism 'tap into' indigenous livelihoods.²⁶⁴ The relationship between debt and development is, of course, historic, but it has now taken on new and more virulent forms in recent history, through the proliferation of microfinance and sub-prime markets. Each video in the trilogy explores a different element of global development – from those who are the subjects of 'development' (the artists, the indigenous) to how people are 'managed' bureaucratically. Global development masks over the agendas of capitalist accumulation, and, as I will argue, has become even more divisive in extracting profit from poverty. The Keela have been 'co-opted' into the Tem's regime, in so far as they attest to having gone along, albeit with gritted teeth, with the plans and 'regeneration' that the Tem have proposed. In

²⁶¹ Not a direct reference to Augé's (1995) concept, but a consideration of the new spaces capital creates as it accumulates. Here I must also mention that a major effect of extraction, both mineral and wage is environmental degradation. The drive for accumulation has put massive pressures on the natural world, and this site of destruction is representative of an aesthetics of extraction.

²⁶² Here I refer to what is also known as international development or development studies – but consistently refer to it as global development throughout the thesis.

²⁶³ Please see the appendix for a longer discussion around global development.

²⁶⁴ See Wherry (2007) and Naomi Klein (2007) for discussion around 'disaster capitalism'.

writing *Keela Mine* I was imagining a community who had been through numerous waves of global development and dispossession. Scattered throughout the script, are lines that reflect on the nature, of the phases and modes of development as exploitation. Chol says of his stall: “I think it’s still microenterprise” in a reflection of the re-naming of old ideas with new spin, Layet reminds Chol “it wasn’t like this before the mining and the enterprise” showing their awareness of their status as guinea pigs in a wider global system.²⁶⁵

Global development is a sphere where capital accumulation can hide like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, ‘doing good’ while simultaneously undermining national autonomy. Recent history has been marked by global financial institutions ‘austerity’ programmes and chronic ‘structural adjustments’, which claim to alleviate poverty and ‘assimilate’ the global South. The current modus operandi is the promotion of ‘enterprise’ thinking and microfinance, which governs the private spaces of NGOs and social enterprise. Global development has become a form of primitive accumulation hidden beneath the rhetoric of economy and the facade of humanitarianism. Samir Amin has argued that ‘culture’ can and has been used to disguise economic issues.²⁶⁶ There has been a continual focus on ‘culture’ or on local ‘cultures’ within development practice, directing the lens away from the totality of global poverty to the singular case study. This approach denies the structural causes of the displacement and poverty of indigenous and agrarian groups, and focuses instead on concepts like ‘social capital’.²⁶⁷ Epifanio San Juan²⁶⁸ and Vivek Chibber²⁶⁹ address what they see as the ‘problem’ of post-colonialism, at least within critical theory, explaining that post-colonial theory has avoided addressing global systems of hegemony, fixating on the pre-eminence of culture over economics. Chibber argues that decades of research on ‘sub-altern’ studies have failed to address the surrounding

²⁶⁵ See Nietch (1996) and Thomas (2012) regarding the ‘adaptability’ of indigenous people in the South Pacific, who infer like Bhabha (1996) that cultural assimilation is never only one way.

²⁶⁶ Amin (1996) (1998)

²⁶⁷ Fine (2001)

²⁶⁸ (2002) ‘Post Colonialism and Politics of Uneven Development’.

²⁶⁹ Chibber (2013)

political economic conditions in the global South.²⁷⁰ This dilemma between post-colonial identity and indigeneity and their inclusion within the neoliberal oeuvre shows the complexity of the indigenous subject in history. However the steady decline in collective resistance in indigenous communities based in the global North since the neoliberal era, unfortunately attests to their co-option by and subsumption to capitalism.

Development logic relies on the binaries of: developed/ underdeveloped, North/South, East/West,²⁷¹ and modern/traditional to set up ideological proposals that engender a change from one side to the other.²⁷² What these binaries, and to a degree global development logic, fails to acknowledge, is their relationship, not to modernity, and accordingly a 'progressive' ideology, but to capitalism. Global development as ideology and practice fails to acknowledge the economic base of class structure and domination, and too often fails to see the global North's position in the globalised class structure. Modern industrialism and Post-War Keynesianism in many global South countries meant indigenous people in Central and South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania were 'put to work' in new industrial centres. Subsequently, the dismantling of welfare state provisions in many countries, following on from John Williamson's *Washington Consensus* (1989), advocated a move from a state controlled economy, to a liberal 'hands off' or market driven approach.²⁷³ These new governing policies left a gaping hole in many countries where the state's 'roll back' left social needs exposed and wanting, ghettoising indigenous communities, leaving them in 'need' of assistance. In fact it was only with the neoliberal privatisation of many state run companies that indigenous people and peasants had to return to the 'handmade' in what can be seen as a 'deskilling',²⁷⁴ or imposed 'traditionalism',²⁷⁵ as they are remade as traditional cultural producers.²⁷⁶ If

²⁷⁰ Chibber (2013)

²⁷¹ Lazarus (2002) 'The Fetish of the 'West'.

²⁷² See Arturo Escobar's (1996) and Gilbert Rist's (2001) critiques of development and the myth of the Third World.

²⁷³ For a discussion on the state's 'roll back' See Peck and Tickell (2002).

²⁷⁴ For a discussion on art and labour and 'deskilling' see Roberts (2007) Braverman (1998).

²⁷⁵ See Scarce (2003), (2005) for a discussion on indigenous craft production, and Wade (1990) for a debate on enforced traditionalism.

²⁷⁶ The pernicious relationship between culture and economy is poignantly reflected in the film *Samson and Delilah* by Warwick Thornton (2009).

their labour becomes 'performative'²⁷⁷ it further separates the cultural producer from the object's original cultural meaning.²⁷⁸ In these situations of 'imposed traditionalism'²⁷⁹ the artist often has to learn and re-perform their own culture. The idea of craft being produced for the tourists through an enforced traditionalism is reflected on in *Keela Mine*. The Keela must make traditional objects to sell to the tourists. However in a perverse destabilisation of the cultural object, they also sell refurbished technological goods, which could be seen as re-made to look 'authentic'. The banality of production and distribution is alluded to as Chol apathetically attends to his work and stall, and his frustrated friend suggests that "ever since the vans have arrived the tourists have just stopped coming", showing a dependency on a resented source of income.

Development in the global South has now become the domain of international financial institutions²⁸⁰ which are responsible for what Ananya Roy has termed the 'financialisation of development',²⁸¹ and as Ben Fine claims, are focused on an 'economic imperative'.²⁸² This movement to financialisation is part of a wider economic climate of speculative capital and expanding 'frontiers' of accumulation, as described by *The Millennium Development Goals*.²⁸³ This new model for development espouses the idea that through the 'democratisation of capital' poverty can and will be alleviated. Microfinance,²⁸⁴ further developed by Nobel Prize winning economist Mohamed Yunnis, espouses the belief that 'credit is a human right', and in this light Bangladesh's Grameen Bank has globally exported the idea that free market ideologies, democratic ideas of humanitarianism and philanthropy can co-exist. As Roy explains:

²⁷⁷ MacCannell (1973) 'Staged Authenticity'.

²⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (2008).

²⁷⁹ Andolina (2005)

²⁸⁰ The IMF, WTO and World Bank.

²⁸¹ Roy (2010)

²⁸² Fine (2003)

²⁸³ 'In essence, microfinance offers each day that the possibility and hope to many poor people of improving – through their own efforts – their household economic welfare and well-being and enterprise stability and growth' from webpage Directory of Development Organisation (2011).

²⁸⁴ Microfinance is understood as credit for the poor, those under the poverty line are offered small loans which are paid back at a high interest.

This kinder gentler capitalism seeks to aggressively mine the ‘fortune at the bottom of the pyramid’, but in doing so it hopes to eradicate ‘poverty through profits.’²⁸⁵

Microfinance is a subprime frontier where development agencies ‘seek out’ new territories as vehicles for the circulation of capital – extracting profit from the poor. The global industry of development is now being merged with financial markets as the world’s biggest banks all have microfinance departments. However Roy suggests that this process of financialisation requires ideological work and is not a streamlined process by any means.²⁸⁶

The poor must be classified and identified for risk before they can become part of global credit systems (see Figure 14 where this quantification of debt is visualised by Kiva²⁸⁷). Roy attests that the reality of microfinance is often heavy handed debt collection in countries where law enforcement is corrupt and the poor have little or no voice.²⁸⁸

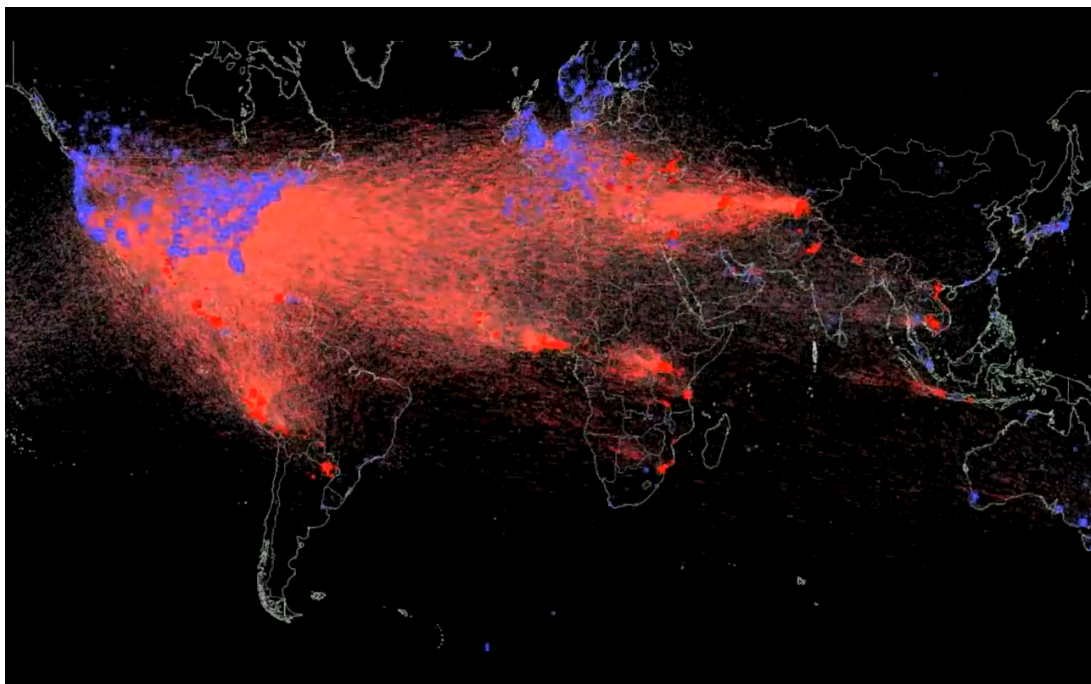


Fig 14 Video Still *Forever Living Everywhere: Induction*(2012)

Lazzarato argues that debt works as a perfect form of control, as unlike the labour relation, it relies on the individual to discipline herself.²⁸⁹ It is the

²⁸⁵ Roy (2010:6)

²⁸⁶ Roy (2010)

²⁸⁷ Kiva is a charity dedicated to ‘micro-loans’ seeking to connect lenders in the global North, with borrowers in the global South.

²⁸⁸ Karim (2011)

²⁸⁹ Lazzarato (2011:55)

ultimate 'subjectification' of the capital relation of extraction.²⁹⁰ What is important to consider is that microfinance is about bringing debt to those who have not experienced it before, they exist as a new 'territory' for extraction. Economist Milford Bateman has spent years tackling thinkers in development who endorse the ideas behind microfinance, and he argues that in pairing microfinance with microenterprise development agencies and micro-financiers are drawing on a falsely seductive concept of empowerment. The misconception is that poor individuals are empowered by enterprise, where as Bateman asserts:

A careful reading of the evidence from economic history undisputedly shows that self employment and microenterprises have most often been promoted as part of the disempowerment of the poor.²⁹¹

Bateman also states that the promotion of self-employment and enterprise ideology under conservative governments reflects a desire to destabilise organised labour and working class politics. 'Social enterprise'²⁹² has become the new buzz-word for social businesses, which have in the U.K taken on board many roles previously the domain of the state.²⁹³ This move to 'enterprise' in the UK, echoes wide ranging cuts to social provisions, and is part of further privatization and the further commodification of social reproduction.

In *Microfinance and it's Discontents: Woman and Debt in Bangladesh* (2011) Laima Karim lays bare the approaches, affects and discourse of microfinance in action in Bangladesh. Karim explains, that through microfinance local women are being used to promote the sale of global phone and food brands, and have become intermeshed into global financial systems of debt. Karim wanted to find out what the actual change 'on the ground' was in Bangladesh after ten years of microfinance. But what Karim found instead was the overbearing presence of NGOs, which had established a private government

²⁹⁰ Lazzarato (2011)

²⁹¹ Bateman (2010:31)

²⁹² Fine (2002)

²⁹³ Which some theorists identify as the privatization of welfare and thus the commodification of social reproduction, see Huws (2011) and Federici (2012).

and no real change to living standards for those below the poverty line.²⁹⁴ This 'subprime' market in Bangladesh, Karim explains, is only viable as strong cultural laws are being harnessed by NGOs in recuperating the loans. Karim explains that a 'discourse of shame' is being used to make sure women repay loans, one's honour is taken away and defaulters are ostracised by their community.²⁹⁵ Julia Elyachar also studied 'the ways in which networks and social practices of the poor have been incorporated into the market'²⁹⁶ through the concept of 'social capital' and microfinance in Egypt. She outlines how a model of neoliberal finance, entrepreneurship and, debt was transplanted by US NGOs to Egypt that cultivated a culture of credit dependency.²⁹⁷

In *Keela Mine* Chol stands idly behind his 'micro-business' where the lack of customers is reflected in the meagre things he sells. I imagined the impossibility of setting up a business with nothing: no capital, few skills and with no customers. The performance *Microenterprize* (2012) (Figure 15) shows a forlorn individual endeavouring to make and put up the signs for her micro-business: selling debt. She is not engaged in producing any material commodities (although we do see signs for art/craft/phones) but rather involved in selling other people's need for money, to buy things, to set up a business of their own. She is situated in an endless cycle of debt and credit that the contemporary subject must face. The act of re-selling this debt, an abstract thing in itself, but without any access to 'real' material funds, becomes a performance of signs. The hand painted signs (copied from small stalls in Ghana and Uganda) represent the painful contradiction between abstract networks of global speculation and the 'grassroots' attempts to disseminate this through a micro-business. Chol represents a new subject or cultural producer under capital and global development. *Keela Mine* illuminates the mystification between 'responsibility' and obligation in situations of desperation. The clinical way that bodies are managed reflects the way that people are managed as data in relation to debt. Chol dutifully

²⁹⁴ Karim: (2011:81)

²⁹⁵ Karim (2011)

²⁹⁶ Elyachar (2005:5)

²⁹⁷ Elyachar (2005) and see Mitchell (2007) for a financial explanation of the 'external debt crisis' in Egypt in the 1990s.

fills out his form, 'signing' his life away. Through this action I wanted to illuminate the relationship between the ownership of bodies through systems of debt and wage labour.



Fig 15 Video Still *Microenterprize* (2012)

The use of 'ethnodevelopment'²⁹⁸ by development NGOs can be seen to reflect an uncritical position within the social sciences that reifies 'grassroots' or cultural centric practices. Indigenous knowledge and social organisation are extracted and 'professionalised' and feed back into the community as a form of 'development'. What is significant about 'art' as a tool for development and potentially why it is so popular as an enterprise option, is that it represents an immediate 'solution', not only economically for the producers, but also in terms of the image it presents for the Western consumers. The costs of setting up an artisan enterprise, are often low, and can take place in the home, involving the use of family members as labourers.²⁹⁹ For example, Leslie Gill (1997) explains that in Sucre Bolivia ASUR an NGO was set up to bring 'back' traditional weaving to the local producers after mining closures created many ghettoised communities. Gill

²⁹⁸ See Nina Laurie, Robert Andolina, and Sarah Radcliffe (2005) 'Ethnodevelopment: Social Movements, Creating Experts and Professionalising Indigenous Knowledge in Ecuador'.

²⁹⁹ Scarce (2003), (2005)

discovered that indigenous identity was used as a tool to 're-develop' traditional skills. Here we can see how tradition and ethnicity are used as a means in global development to reintroduce 'heritage' to a people who have 'lost' their traditions.³⁰⁰ This type of development is more often than not justified by its connection with revenue through tourism. However, tourism is implicated at many levels of global extraction – both culturally and environmentally.³⁰¹ Tourism can also stimulate cultures of competition, between indigenous producers, replicating structures of workers and bosses in small communities. Rudi Colleredo-Mansfield's *An Ethnography of Neoliberalism* (2002) celebrates this cultural stratification, and charts the growth of artisanal communities in Central and South America.³⁰² Colleredo-Mansfield sees the role of 'competition' working to 'consolidate cultural identities and community commitments'³⁰³ even though it 'produces sharp differences in material wellbeing'.³⁰⁴ This culture of unequal development has fostered the creation of a culture of 'bosses' and 'managers', and is premised on an exploitation and extraction of the many by the few. The same conditions of 'competition' can be seen as motivating a change in the cultural production of the Pacific Island of Rarotonga. Katherine Giuffre's ethnography *Collective Creativity: Art and Society in the South Pacific*³⁰⁵ (2009) surmises that the introduction of a Western art world model created cultures of competition and enterprise in this small island community. Giuffre witnessed an 'art explosion' as many locals and returning expatriates all started to make art spurred on by tourist dollars entering the market. After the influx of cruise ships, package holidays, and most significantly Cook islanders that had been schooled in New Zealand, an 'art world' started to emerge which facilitated competition and the growth of 'art stars'.³⁰⁶ Giuffre highlights the importance of the transformation from craft to 'fine art'

³⁰⁰ 'Not only are the former agricultural workers being pushed out of farm, factory, and protected government employment while nonetheless being pulled into handicraft production and tourist services', but the state in Costa Rica promotes 'some types of cultural commodities as a means to protect cultural traditions and to validate a favourable public identity narrative for themselves' Wherry (2007:220).

³⁰¹ Brian Burke explains that: 'Exotic myths about indigenous people have such power that NGOs and corporations have not left the strategic deployment of culture to indigenous people themselves' Burke (2010: 31), and see Shiner (1994) for 'authenticity' debates, Flusty (2006) for the site of tourism, and Klein (2007) for 'disaster tourism'.

³⁰² Colleredo-Mansfield (2002)

³⁰³ Colleredo-Mansfield (2002:114)

³⁰⁴ Ibid

³⁰⁵ Giuffre (2009)

³⁰⁶ Giuffre (2009:55)

production and uses Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital³⁰⁷ to explain how local artists and galleries created hierarchies and distinctions between arts that were once considered inseparable from the traditional culture. It must be emphasised, that in both cases, the motivation for producing culture-as-commodity was poverty, brought on by the reduction of welfare provision, job losses, and free-market ideology – brought on by neoliberal reform.



Fig 16 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

In the final part of *Keela Mine*, Zeel, Chol's sister, is found concocting a bomb, which she later straps to herself to detonate at the 'extraction' vans. In this scene, Figure 16, I am questioning and reconsidering the tenets of indigenous resistance.³⁰⁸ While the 'by any means necessary'³⁰⁹ attitude was very much a part of the resistive rhetoric of the 1960-70s indigenous militias, the concept of 'terror' and terrorism has been strategically re-framed as a-political since 'the war on terror'. I make explicit reference in *Keela Mine* to the place of Muslim 'terror' in the western imaginary, and media. The

³⁰⁷ Bourdieu (1977)

³⁰⁸ Petras and Veltmeyer (2010) and Cornthassel (2007) question the efficacy of 'inclusion' of indigenous rights in UN policy and central government planning.

³⁰⁹ Black Panther Party slogan.

relationship between terror and extraction is a complex one, and one I did not have time to properly address here, but I am conscious of the relationship between the extraction of oil by the West, and the ongoing demonization, and in many ways eventuality of fundamentalist forms of resistance under capitalism. Anti-terrorism has become a weapon in the hands of global North governments, which has justified both ideological control and resource extraction. The singular 'terrorist' can be defined as an unwanted 'glitch' in the capitalist machine, unwanted but unthreatening. In the video this act of 'terror' is reflective of the desperation of the 'indebted man', who, as I have expressed, only has his body left to sell; as such this act of 'terror' represents the ultimate equivalence. Zeel's actions also reflect on the ways in which 'culture' can in certain instances become a noose with which to hang oneself. This act of 'terror' prioritises the individual with a single cause over a collective struggle, the action of Zeel blowing herself up, on the one hand, offers a resistance to being sacrificed as a surplus³¹⁰ and, on the other, a ceremonial embodiment of capitalist extraction explored throughout the trilogy.

1.4 The Social Art Work: Extracting Alterity

In this section I look more closely at the role of art and artists that utilise ideas of the social, representations of the global South and what I claim to be tropes of global development in their work. I will explain how social art works 'mine' people and social practices, extracting as Dimitrakaki has argued, a further surplus from them.³¹¹ This extractive logic which follows on from the capitalist process of accumulation quantifies and identifies 'the social' or alterior, as a subject, which is appropriated through an aesthetic form and put into circulation – like capital – in the art world. The 'social' becomes a resource, and it is 'mined' like minerals, as social art works often do, that is they do not 'create' new phenomena but rely on 'original' or indigenous forms

³¹⁰ Here I consider Lippard's (1995) argument around art or the art object as activism.

³¹¹ Here Dimitrakaki (2011) refers specifically to the image or video of the labourer in contemporary art.

already in existence. In making this claim, I am not suggesting that art practice should be a-social but aim to open up a critical dialogue that takes on board the influence of neoliberal forms of governmentality and its specific economic logic, which has influenced art production since the 1990s. In making connections between art practices and global development practices I want to illuminate the reoccurring paternalism in both, and take into consideration how value is created and circulated within social art spheres. Which leads me to ask is not the aesthetics of relational art an aesthetics of humanitarianism? Or extraction by altruism? If so why has humanitarianism been so willingly accepted by contemporary artists?



Fig 17. Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

Many contemporary artists have adopted global development tropes both unwittingly, and wittingly, without investigating the long and problematic history of such practices and their myths and realities.³¹² And consequently without deconstructing the historical and ideological foundations of development artists are doomed, as Gilbert Rist suggests, to ‘perpetuate a system which maintains and reinforces exclusion while claiming to eliminate it.’³¹³ ‘Social capital’,³¹⁴ in its conception and use by state and international

³¹² Rist (2001), Escobar (1999), Fine (2002)

³¹³ Rist (2001)

organizations, is useful when understanding the 'social turn' in art and wider relational practices. It draws on what is seen as communities already existing value, and is strongly connected with social enterprise. Potentially what the artist tries to capture in practices that 'work with' already existing communities, or focus on creating one, is what could be defined as 'social capital' – given its reliance on networks of trust, understanding, identity and ethnicity.

The aims and objectives of many 'social art' practitioners lie closely to those of development agencies and government planners, putting the onus back on the people to 'do it for themselves.'³¹⁵ Historically non-object based practices have sought a way out of artwork as commodity or bourgeois regimes of culture. However the new 'immaterial' social art work in the global North not only employs the service-as-commodity, but has become involved in distributing resources itself. Social relations in capitalism have become a greater source of value for artists than the object. And while 'issue' based work is still popular in social art works, its extraction from the social and historical context has meant that art, like development, is guilty of separating and objectifying 'issues', rendering them a-political. Accordingly the disjuncture between life in the global North and South, and between the value of labour means that 'life' cannot be employed as subject without a consideration of the way in which 'life' varies across the globe. Marc James Léger is critical of what he sees as community art's adoption of neoliberal friendly forms of social intervention and the 'postmodern preoccupation with identity'.³¹⁶ This does not mean that a radical praxis in the arts is no longer possible, but that in the particular case of community/relational arts we must ask: what is the role of capital and the neoliberal world order in structuring and influencing these practices, and in what ways are they within or outside

³¹⁴ Ben Fine has written widely on use of 'social capital' (2002) (2003), however the term was originally theorised by Coleman (1988) and has its roots in Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital.

³¹⁵ This DIY aesthetic can be seen in Swoon *Combit Shelter* (2010), artist Jeanne Van Heeswijk, 'community bakery project' (2012) in Liverpool and Superflex's *Guarana Power* (2003) which worked with indigenous groups in Peru. In all these examples the artist is a 'project' manager in supervising groups to 'do better'.

³¹⁶ Léger (2011:38)

of this order?³¹⁷ What as Claire Bishop and Grant Kester have asked, are the 'outcomes' or aims of such practices, and how are ideas of community and collaboration to be understood in situations where we have people from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds? Art practice must heed the same warning signs as global development practice, and it must do so with greater trepidation, as objectives and outcomes within artistic practice could be reduced, as Roberts suggests, to a branch of social work.³¹⁸ It is the underlying biases of this social work or development work under capital that need to be re-addressed in particular in community or relational work, and as Malcolm Miles explains:

The artist's privileged status offers no guarantee of criticality. The question is to what extent art enables a sense of agency, and by implication whether the divide between artist and public equates to the relations of social production and economic exchange.³¹⁹

The politics of representation come into play when 'working' directly with the community, and while many projects have sought to undermine ethnocentric and hegemonic systems of governance and behaviour, the action of setting up an organisation, or project does require the artist to establish a set of guiding principles that can never speak for all the community.³²⁰ In conceptualising 'relational aesthetics' Nicolas Bourriaud identified the 'currency' in social relations.³²¹ What must be identified, however, is that social relationships and networks take on specific aesthetic and political forms. In considering a range of relational artworks we can begin to see how the aesthetic forms of social artwork have been appropriated directly from business practices, NGOs and education providers – all systems that have been reformed under neoliberal capitalism. The taken for granted sites/spaces of the meeting room, the library, the classroom, the diagram – have too quickly been appropriated into the relational oeuvre. The extraction

³¹⁷ In different ways Liam Gillick tries to re-frame this aesthetic neoliberal world order and more critically Melanie Gilligan explores the logics of finance in *Crisis in the Credit System* (2009) and Superflex in *The Financial Crisis* (2009).

³¹⁸ Roberts (2010)

³¹⁹ Miles (2009:426)

³²⁰ See Miwon Kwon *One place After Another* (2004) where very early on, like Foster, she acknowledges the insufficiency of the artist in speaking of 'others' experience.

³²¹ Bourriaud *Relational Aesthetics* (1998).

of 'real' social relations, calls into question, whether the role of the artist as 'passive' documentarian³²² or active organiser is any less problematic? Could relational art be seen as appropriation by altruism? Or if we are to re-read Bourriaud's artist as a 'catalyst' is relationality merely a neoliberal filter machine? Andrea Fraser has questioned the lack of institutional critique in contemporary art in recent years,³²³ which means not only do we need to reframe our understanding of the art institution but sharpen our tools for its critique. If the gallery is now a classroom, a youth centre, and a school, our critique must widen to take stock of the way the art institution facilitates social reproduction. In 'blowing up' the caravan (Figure 17) *Keela Mine* both destroys the 'filter machine' resisting extraction, and feeds back directly into the pathos directed on those who 'need' to be helped or developed. As altruism, or the aesthetics of altruism, feeds on disaster, allegorising political violence in the singular act of terror.

Grant Kester is clear on what he sees as 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' relational or community practice, and understands 'good' social art practice to be 'dialogic'.³²⁴ In *The One and the Many* Kester describes the work of artist collective *Dialogue*, run in the main by artist Navjot Altaf. This art co-operative provides a service to the Adavasi, a displaced indigenous group in Northern India, who Kester asserts, unlike 'NGOs' 'Development agencies' and 'resistance fighters',³²⁵ have not tried to implement the Adavasi in their rhetoric of development or change. Kester cites the provision of a space for an 'exchange' and the generation of revenue for the Adavasi through the sale of art works and 'real' change through the setting up of water pumps in the community as testimony for their success. However, this project, I feel is glaringly close to many 'ethno-development' projects. The production of arts and crafts for sale becomes a microenterprise and the setting up of water-pumps (even if decorated) could be seen as part of Oxfam's charity schemes. The artists were able to 'give' their time and money to the project as they make money from selling their work on the global art market, so what

³²² Nash (2008)

³²³ Fraser (2005)

³²⁴ Kester (2011)

³²⁵ Kester (2011:27)

this project (and many others) represents is a 'trickle down' or small-scale distribution of personal resources. The artwork consists of photos of the community and their new water pumps, that does not deviate from the regime of images of poverty and global development, represented below in *Keela Mine* (Figure 18) and cemented in global north consciousness.³²⁶ Léger who is critical of Kester's view of community projects states that:

artists work with community subjects whose social disadvantages are individualised and whose path to social improvement is clearly marked out in relation to existing state institutions as well as free market entrepreneurial solutions.³²⁷

However ironically the artist can take on the role of the developer and the developed simultaneously.³²⁸ As artists are, unequivocally affected by, and a product of their neoliberal epoch.³²⁹ The artist is in a double bind, as while they may be the developer, in both the global North and South, they are themselves subjects of structural funding cuts, precarity, and unemployment; they are in essence needy of development themselves.³³⁰

³²⁶ See Hill and Sinervo (2011) 'The Visual economy of Andean Childhood Poverty', but more importantly Anthes (2009) who writes that indigenous artists are absent from biennales, but are often used as subject in artwork by Western artists.

³²⁷ Léger (2011)

³²⁸ Artists have taken to 'crowd-funding' through websites like Kickstarter for funding, and governments are now focusing on 'microgrants' for arts. See also Shulenberg 'The Rise of the Voluntariat' (2014).

³²⁹ See BAVO (2011:67) who describe the relationship between the Netherlands government and the arts sector under neoliberalism.

³³⁰ They survive in what both Roberts (2010) and Sholette (2010) have described as the secondary economy of arts, and personal debt.



Fig 18 Video Still *Keela Mine* (2012)

The place of social art works since the 1990s has not waned but it has become an accepted and legitimised form of art practice. Does this represent a conflation with how labour in the global North has shifted from primary production to services, or is it part of a wider urge on the part of the artist for new forms of community? I want to ask, has the artist succumbed too easily to what Jakob Schillinger has critiqued as ‘recessional aesthetics’³³¹ and subsequently are artists becoming the new ‘volunteers’ in a philanthro-capitalist model?³³² As Claire Bishop’s writes:

This critical task [of artists] is particularly pressing in Britain, where New Labour uses a rhetoric almost identical to that of socially engage art to steer culture toward policies of social inclusion. Reducing art to statistical information about target audiences and “performance” indicators, the government prioritises social affect over artistic quality...³³³

Such an observation is important, and in line with critiques of enterprise culture. But Bishop does not interrogate her own privileged subject position as a critic to make ‘objective’ statements about ‘artistic quality.’ Is it not the role of the artist to continually re-define these aesthetic forms? Is it so bad,

³³¹ Schillinger (2009)

³³² Roy (2010), Thorup (2013)

³³³ Bishop (2006:180)

therefore, for art to have a 'social affect'? The problem with much relational art, is not, in its desire to establish a 'social affect', in and on society, but rather the politics of both the actions and approaches. Bishop suggests that the artists Oda Projesi do not extend their practice further than 'community work'. Similarly the *Wochenklausur* group is invited by art institutions to develop specific social programmes that 'deal' with important 'social issues': 'the host institution finances the project and its exhibition rooms act as studio and office....the group has created a medical service for the homeless, founded a hostel for woman with drug problems, helped foreign nationals travel legally to Austria.'³³⁴ In this way the group are acting as volunteers, as charity workers, and as activists all in one. In an attempt to make politically charged statements that directly assist the disenfranchised parts of the community. As such they could be seen to be fulfilling the role provided by public and private agencies. How do we differentiate their actions from an NGO? And therefore what aesthetic form does altruism take?³³⁵

Pedagogy is crucial to both art and global development, as the dissemination of knowledge is an integral part of relational art and development practice.³³⁶ Pedagogic forms could also be seen as one of the aesthetic tropes of altruism. The often unseen nature or taken for granted forms of pedagogy-as-apparatus are apparent in situations where different cultures meet. Consequently there is too often an acceptance of different forms of knowledge production and dissemination in both art and development. We can witness the mechanisms of pedagogy and extraction as altruism in Paul Chan's *Work Waiting for Godot* (2007).³³⁷ Chan staged the play on the streets of post-Katrina New Orleans, and accompanied the program by extensive arts education in local schools. Shannon Jackson explains that what we see in Chan's work:

³³⁴ From *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, (2011:61) Edited by Klaten. R, Huber. M, Bieber .A, Alonzo. P and Jansen. G.

³³⁵ Boris Groys (2010:38-39) theorises that the predicament of the contemporary artist is the search for sincerity.

³³⁶ Claire Bishop (2012) identifies the limits and opportunities of art as pedagogy in *Artificial Hells*.

³³⁷ For a discussion around Chan's oeuvre see Schillinger (2009) 'Recessional Aesthetics: Artist practice as the Chrono-logic of capitalism', where Schillinger is critical of Chan's writing of 'the spirit of recession' – this 'spirit' could have been what he is channelling in post Katrina New Orleans.

was not a refusal of the neoliberal condition that many see undergirding Katrina but a re-coordination of its signature structures for a different kind of public end...³³⁸

In Chan's play, concurrent mechanism of extraction are interwoven: the extraction of images of disaster capitalism, set against the transformative apparatus of 'art', which then extracts further value in the dissemination of images in the global art world. Pedagogy is pervasive, not just within relational practice but within art institutions. However I must ask at this stage how does an action, which offers something, more often than not for free, function as an extractive process? Whether the 'social art work' is a pastiche, parody, or deadly serious in its attempts, it still appropriates and extracts from the social, it is these points of cultural exchange in the social or pedagogic work, which enact the often unseen operations of cultural extraction.

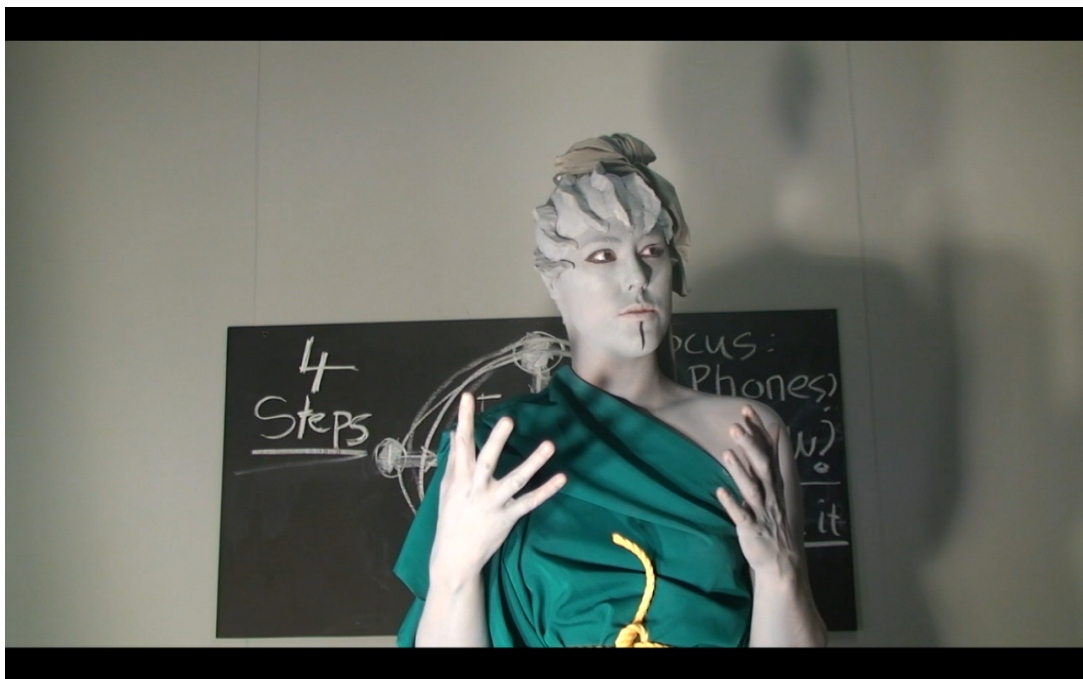


Fig 19 Video Still *Forever Living Everywhere Induction* (2012)

Renzo Martens' film *Enjoy Poverty 3* (2008), however, stands alone in its attempts to ridicule the apparatus of pedagogy and global development in contemporary art. Here Martens employs pastiche to interrogate the structures that underlie global poverty and aid. He is also self-reflexive about his role as an artist in the DRC making a film, and acknowledges the artist as

³³⁸ Jackson (2011:238)

culpable in the dissemination of images of abject poverty.³³⁹ Consequently he makes an entrepreneurial case for the Congolese exploiting their own poverty.³⁴⁰ Martens subsequently has set up the *Institute for Human Activities* (2012), in the DRC, where he employed Richard Florida to give a lecture on the way art can 'kickstart' the process to gentrification. Martens' attempt to gentrify a piece of land 800 kilometres up the Congo River from Kinshasa, is an attempt at restaging *The Heart of Darkness* 2012 style. It is designed by Martens to fail. It is the visibility of this failure that marks his work out from many other projects.³⁴¹ However although Martens illuminates the paternalistic and unequal power relations between North and South, he does so literally *at* the expense of those in Africa. Denying any local voice, 'importing' talent, but more importantly if you look at the sponsors of I.H.A, you see that Martens is being funded by corporations and governments who profit from these same systems of global inequality.

This is why in making the video *Forever Living Everywhere Induction* (2012, Figure 19) I parody the figure of the 'developer' or artist, as instructor, giving an instructional 'lesson' to unsuspecting subjects who needed to be 'developed'. The 'joke', however, is strictly at the expense of the pedagogic form, and the hypocrisy of the financialisation of development. The performance is cut with the soundtrack of Eddy Chai, an entrepreneur, who is delivering a seminar on his franchise 'Forever Living'. Chai, a Taiwanese national is delivering his spiel in English to an audience in Mumbai. I was interested in the cultural layering of the talk, which represented the transfer of neoliberal enterprise culture between two emerging 'Asian Tigers.' The seminar and my performance both engage ideas around the transfer of ideology, and synthesises the 'developer', the businessman and the artist into one. The video seeks through its combination of performance, audio and found clips of 'microloans' to set up a dialogue that interrogates the dissemination of ideas of enterprise culture. The images of Kiva's 'microloans,' moving across the globe show this in motion – tracking the

³³⁹ Demos (2013) for an analysis of Martens work.

³⁴⁰ Martens along with Artur Zmijewski, Dimitrakaki (2013) identifies as the 'bad boys' of relational aesthetics.

³⁴¹ Dimitrakaki (2013)

nodes of extraction, as each recipient is now indebted. I wanted to implicate myself here as an artist within the global dynamic of pedagogy. In making work about the management of artists, through the simulated strategies of development, I am able to take two steps back and question how ideologies of paternalism, management and pedagogy are applied not only to aesthetics but as a discursive form which structures the actions that artists continue to make.

This Chapter sought to locate a zone, or space of extraction in an increasingly 'deterritorialised' world. Or more appropriately, it sought to question the idea of the weightless and fragmented world in which we live. Each example of extraction given in this Chapter is located in a very specific place and time, and has very real affects on the bodies, minds, land, and environments of those who exist in proximity to it. It became increasingly important to identify that the critiques of post-Fordism were detached from a truly global analysis of labour conditions. Fordism has simply been relocated, and not only Fordism, other forms of feudal production like slavery and debt bondage have accompanied it. However this illumination is as much about the problematic condition of the global art world. A world that purports to be inclusive, and global, but primarily exists within the global North, and as I suggest aggressively mines the global South for both material and immaterial resource. A world that has embodied the strategies of one of the more problematic social sciences: global development, and transformed these paternal, and imperial practices into artwork with social characteristics. But this problematic between what is outside and what is inside is reflective of wider arguments about capitalist subsumption and the concept of the 'other'. How do we successfully understand the way that struggle presents itself globally without usurping that same struggle into the creative oeuvre of the artist's pallet or development agencies repertoire? I have suggested, however, that we do not shy away from representing real issues and people, as difficult as it may seem, within cultural production. Projects that seek to 'facilitate' or symbolise social or political situations in the global South feed back into an impotent relationship between art and politics, and avoid

addressing the complicit and benevolent role that art plays in creating and cementing a global 'South'.

CHAPTER TWO



Fig 20. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

Art, Reproduction and [I]material Extraction in *Synophresia Nervosa*

Introduction

Synophresia Nervosa (2013) describes the fictional world of a group of artists who occupy a geographical and theoretical space more in line with the global North, so in this chapter we experience a shift from South to North.³⁴² The 'Artisans'³⁴³ (Figure 20) who make up the video are instantly differentiated from the Keela, we have heard of their existence through the objects in *Keela Mine*, and we are made aware of their elevated status as the second scene shows a couple eating at what appears to be a restaurant. The space of the

³⁴² While the costumes still appear 'eastern' or more specifically 1960s, this was because I am still invested in this world being fictional, or alien.

³⁴³ For the purposes of the trilogy I named the artists artisans, but refer to both in this chapter. My reason for naming this group 'artisans' was their relationship to a) patronage by the state, and b) the studio system, which seemed to echo the guild system, more than the contemporary private studio system. The 'artisan' Holert suggests could be seen as an alternative form of cultural producer – quoting Raqs Media Collective – between the 'proletarianised worker and individual artist' (2011:121).

studio and artistic production is central to the video, and it is the interrogation of art, the artist, and cultural extraction that informs the narrative. *Synophresia Nervosa* deconstructs the 'mystique' of the studio and the production of art, and deliberately interrogates the 'subjectivity' of the 'artist', while simultaneously, contemplating the forms creative extraction can take, and subsequently what is at stake in this extraction. As an artist, making a film about an artist making art in her studio, I aimed to question certain cultural hierarchies, but also to bring into focus the different 'costs' of artistic labour and its contradictory nature. Consequently, the relationship between the artist and their practice is made immediately uncomfortable in the film, the stress and insanity experienced by the artisans is reflected in both their studio practice and their personal relationships. The impact of commodification is palpable in the video and the regulation and 'professionalization' of artist-as-commodity and as a commodity producer, creates tensions between an idea of originality and the general abstraction of the commodity exchange under capitalism. The character Lox is shown making her work, with increasing neurotic compulsion; it appears that she loses the separation between her body and the objects she makes. Lox, could be said, as Ursula Huws writes: 'to be permanently poised at the moment of alienation...the work, as it comes into being both belongs to and is torn from the begetter.'³⁴⁴ The depiction of very 'material' practices within the studio refers to the continuing analog nature of contemporary art,³⁴⁵ but at the same time I consciously engage ideas around the 'immaterial'³⁴⁶ thesis, because of its on-going role in art production. I consciously shifted the focus in *Synophresia Nervosa* to the realm of social reproduction. All scenes involve an aspect of social reproduction (love, eating, drinking, sleeping, friendship, bodily processes). This was motivated by the increasing commodification of areas of social life,³⁴⁷ and also, what we see as a preoccupation with social reproduction in art, reflected in artworks with 'social characteristics'.

³⁴⁴ Huws (2010: 505)

³⁴⁵ See Claire Bishop (2012) 'Digital Divide' where Bishop dispels the notion that there has been a transformation to the digital in art practice. She identifies a lament of the material and 'un-reproducible' mediums like analog film and social practices in place of the digital.

³⁴⁶ Lazzarato on 'Immaterial Labour' (1996)

³⁴⁷ Huws (2012)

This relationship between aspects of social reproduction and the commercial sphere illuminates the ways in which artists have had to incorporate bodily and mind sacrifices into their work. The performance is made into a physical object, which carries the ‘aura’ of this self-sacrifice.³⁴⁸ The relationship between the body and debt discussed in the first Chapter becomes an interesting parable for the making of art, which has often been comparable to the sacrifice of bodies. Creative labour suffers as ‘in that moment of creativity the worker has not yet separated from his/her creation, this is experienced as a personal failure’³⁴⁹ and therefore the ‘potential for rejection lurks always in the background of the creation-expropriation drama.’³⁵⁰ The artist embodies the contemporary worker that Franco Bifo Berardi describes in *The Soul at Work* (2009). Artists have already taken it upon themselves to blur the lines between life and work, labour and leisure, through the process of externalising subjectivity into an artwork. The artist is always ‘on the job’, every life experience is turned into art – they are an exemplary model for the contemporary worker who never turns their mobile phone off. Leading Alexi Penzin to write that:

the subjectivity of the contemporary artist is probably the brightest expression of the flexible, mobile, non-specialised substance of contemporary living labour...³⁵¹

The video, however, moves back and forth between what the artist is willing to sacrifice, how much she is willing to give-up for extraction, and how the lines that blur art/subject/commodity create a feedback loop represented by the insanity of the characters. The ‘ideas lab’ is a new invention for the extraction of ideas, a metaphorical manifestation of the contemporary creative work place, or for that matter the university. The introduction of the ideas lab reflects the increased mechanisation/digitization of labour/life and the consequent under-consumption of material objects by the managerial class, who “no longer have room for our work”. The ‘ideas lab’ then becomes an invention, where the state can recoup value on the ‘ideas’, taken directly

³⁴⁸ Note that this idea of sacrifice could be understood as religious sacrifice, but is also be understood in terms of an ideology of female sacrifice – both in the ‘sacrifices’ women make and the idea of the ‘sacrificed’ women (through the objectification of women’s bodies) or the biological body.

³⁴⁹ Huws (2010: 511)

³⁵⁰ Huws (2010)

³⁵¹ Penzin (2012:81)

from the artisans, to pay for their 'fee'. Capitalism rests on the perceived concept of freedom and the brutality of exchange value, which is why the Keela must 'sell' their organs, and the artisans receive a 'fee' for their ideas. Everyone in the trilogy is 'free' to sell their labour. However, *Synophresia Nervosa* does seek to intentionally blur the lines between work and life, production and reproduction, pointing to the further penetration of the exchange abstraction. Scenes of desperation, the breakdown of love and friendship, and the way 'symbolic' reproduction replaces the need/desire for a 'real' family – all represent this gradual subsumption. The 'dream-space' or 'insane-space', structures the video, by offering a moment of reprieve, to be quickly followed by its commoditisation or transcendence into bodily sacrifice. What happens when the logic of surplus extraction is embodied in the workers themselves? Does this turn the human mind/body into a sacrificial lamb offering itself up to the slaughter? Or could a more terrifying logic be the very idea of individual 'creative' consciousness, which Alfred Sohn-Rethel correlates with the ultimate abstraction of exchange value?³⁵²

In this chapter I begin by locating *Synophresia Nervosa* within current and historical discussions of the place of autonomous art, and its relationship to capitalism, questioning art's relationship to the commodity and the value form and the separation between intellectual and manual labour. I then readdress materialist debates around art, autonomy, and value in light of current theoretical and economic concerns facing artists, specifically addressing how artists 'get paid'. I develop this idea further, by looking at the synthesis of art and life, and consider how the sphere of social reproduction and its conception is an important analytical tool when explaining the development of artistic 'technique'. This then leads on to an exploration of the way the artist's body and or soul is redefined as material, or material redefined as subject, in the process of cultural and commercial extraction under late capitalism. I explain how the use of 'body horror' throughout the trilogy enables me to visualise this synthesis and reflects wider social concerns about capitalist extraction. Finally I look at the way 'artistic technique' could be identified as

³⁵² Sohn-Rethel (1978)

part of the 'general intellect' and consider through the video and the 'ideas lab' how ideas are extracted from cultural producers.

2.1 Art, Autonomy and the Commodity

The question of the artwork as commodity and the commodification of artwork is central to the 'modern' art project.³⁵³ And, if we are to consider the way in which extraction frames and affects art and artists, we need to address the two points at which extraction can occur. Firstly, in artistic labour, through the extraction of a surplus, and secondly, through the extraction of value – from the art object in circulation. In considering the efficacy of autonomous art, as a critical discourse, it is crucial to also examine the internal dynamics of artistic production and its relationship to reification, the commodity, and class.³⁵⁴ Because autonomous art is 'relentlessly domesticated and dissolved by capital',³⁵⁵ it is always working 'against time' and 'out of joint'.³⁵⁶ In this section I consider debates around the artwork as commodity, in order to identify how and why this question is continually relevant for art and specifically for the video *Synophesia Nervosa*. Asking how does extraction structure art production and how are artists implicated in cultures of extraction?

Because autonomous art is a by-product of the social conditions of capitalism³⁵⁷ it is always implicated by relationships of extraction. Even if the artist is not directly alienated by the estrangement of her labour, she produces work, either within the confines of capitalist institutions, or for sale in the capitalist market. However, ironically, it is through this relationship with or against accumulation and extraction that the artist is able to conceive work, which is autonomous of capital. Roberts writing on Theodor Adorno's

³⁵³ See Spaulding (2014) for a discussion around modernism and the value form Spaulding writes 'modernist art is value thinking its own sublation' *Mute* Online.

³⁵⁴ Peter Bürger (1984) identifies the unique role played by the modern avant-garde, arising out of capitalism it sought to radically critique art as an institution and smash to pieces the organic cosmology, which it previously created and reflected. For other discussions of the role of the avant-garde today see Léger (2011), Alain Badiou (2006) and Roberts (2010).

³⁵⁵ Roberts (2015:116)

³⁵⁶ Roberts (2015)

³⁵⁷ See Bürger (1984) and Adorno (2002), and for a discussion around art and autonomy see Hamilton (2009).

concept of negation explains that: 'autonomy [in art] can only practice its strategies of negation in messy negotiation with these dominant conditions of production and exchange.'³⁵⁸ This means that in *Synophresia Nervosa* the artisans 'technique' no longer functions in the space between the commodity and non-commodity (because of the extraction/expropriation of ideas); art as autonomous can only be revealed through negation. The subsumption of the artisan in the video under the logic of exchange value reduces creative thought to an appendage of capital.³⁵⁹



Fig 21. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

The disillusion felt by the artisans as their smoke and mirrors moment of reprieve in the space of heteronomy (that of being in-between the market) initiates three very different responses from the artisans. Erosa leaves, realising the gap between exchange value and artistic technique has closed. We find out he is going to join the 'slum' class. He understands the limits to his autonomy and chooses to re-skill his technique through social displacement. Lycian on the other hand stays, not because she is aware of how potentially she could subvert the new opportunities provided by the quickening pace of ideas and accumulation, to create a cleavage between autonomy and her ideas as commodity, but because she has given in to the

³⁵⁸ Roberts (2015:117-118)

³⁵⁹ As we see in artists who make work for the market 'on demand' or commercial designers.

'fetishistic coherence of autonomous works of art.'³⁶⁰ She believes too willingly in her role as artisan. Lox, however, responds to the social conditions in which she is positioned. She continues to make work, which is both commodity and not, work which cannot be commodified, and equally cannot be called 'autonomous' as those deemed insane are often called 'outsider' artists. As Roberts writes, 'in turning itself into an imagined 'thing apart' the autonomous artwork highlights that not all things can be reduced to the logic of exchange value.'³⁶¹ Lox inverts the commodity relationship through her 'insanity', she does not allow her mind/subject to be commodified, and instead forces her body (but a body which has now become 'useless') back into the exchange relationship. Andrea Fraser argues that 'artists and intellectuals reproduce structures of social inequality' and consequently 'the artist must develop a reflexive practice that first uses aesthetic autonomy as a weapon against oneself, a kind of self-instrumentalization of resistance'.³⁶² This means the artist must continually re-infect themselves with the virus of self-reflexivity and social critique to avoid becoming passive in the face of capitalist ideology. In *Synophresia Nervosa*, the artwork-as-commodity form now takes the form of 'immaterial' ideas. Lox thus understands her body sculptures, as outside of the commodity form and radically 'useless', neither possessing exchange nor use value. She uses her body as a weapon against itself through the process of mutilation.³⁶³

Adorno situates autonomous art within the historical context of capitalism, and asserts its autonomy is a direct result of its separation from its specific social function, meaning that devoid of its use-value, it functions only through exchange-value.³⁶⁴ The artwork, Adorno proclaims, is able to exist as autonomous through its position as commodity. As Stewart Martin explains:

³⁶⁰ Roberts (2015:117)

³⁶¹ Roberts (2015:117)

³⁶² Fraser quoted in Léger (2011:16).

³⁶³ The artist 'mutilating' their own body or mind is an on-going artistic trope, but here we can relate it to a wider process of abstraction and the commodity exchange.

³⁶⁴ See Adorno (2002) and Brecht, who identifies the cleavage that is created in the commodification of art, opening up a space for the 'secularized conception of autonomous art' Brecht quoted in Markus (2001:7-8) and see Bürger (1984).

autonomous art is not outmoded by its commodification, but is rather a contradictory product of it: namely, that autonomous art is both produced by *and* destroyed by capitalist culture, both its ideology *and* its critique...³⁶⁵

If the artwork is the 'ultimate commodity'³⁶⁶ then artistic labour must to a certain degree be alienated labour.³⁶⁷ However because of the working conditions of artistic production it is not 'wage labour' in the traditional sense.³⁶⁸ Which leaves artistic labour and the artwork-as-commodity cut adrift from the traditional mechanisms of class struggle.³⁶⁹ Although, if we are to assume that art is only produced by non-alienated labour we must address the way the exchange relationship permeates into spheres outside of the wage relationship through the process of reification. As Lukács explains:

Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitively into the consciousness of man.³⁷⁰

We must then assume that subjects are 'pre-formed'³⁷¹ and arts autonomy as commodity is quickly re-absorbed back into the accumulation process by its alienated producer/consumer.³⁷² If we consider the idea of the subject as pre-formed and the permeation of the value-form deeper into social relationships, we must then understand an expanded idea of surplus value, and thus extraction.³⁷³ If value can be created outside of the working day (as man is pre-reified) then artistic labour itself, could be understood as alienated labour and artworks as commodities. Because of this pernicious relationship Walter Benjamin sought to identify not 'the economic genesis of culture, but the

³⁶⁵ Martin (2007)

³⁶⁶ Martin (2007)

³⁶⁷ See Huws (2014) 'The Underpinnings of Class in the Digital Age: Living Labour and Value' for a discussion on alienated and non-alienated labour.

³⁶⁸ Spaulding (2015)

³⁶⁹ Bürger (1984:89) 'Brecht develops a concept that entails a change of function and sticks to what is concretely achievable'. However in constructing a genuinely political art (the bearer of use values) Brecht may have missed the opportunity, which Adorno posits for autonomous art as entirely that – autonomous.

³⁷⁰ Lukács (1971:83)

³⁷¹ Ray (2011:173) discussing Adorno's concept.

³⁷² See Lazzarato (2014:31) where he writes 'it takes over human beings "from the inside" on the pre-personal level', this cognitive re-programming is also explored by Sohn-Rethel (1978) and Lukács (1971).

³⁷³ See Smith (2014: 223) where Smith (in relation to Marx) explains that 'capital' is ontologically prior to – and shapes – the intentions and actions of individual agents'.

expression of the economy in culture³⁷⁴ and therefore ‘the comprehension of the economic process as a sensuously presentable primal phenomenon’.³⁷⁵ Here Benjamin does not ask directly if artwork is in fact a commodity but grasps what it is to live among commodities as cultural expressions. Commodities endow ‘the things of everyday with an illusory glitter an aureole: a weak remnant of the sacred’,³⁷⁶ the arcade then becomes the sacred space of the commodity, and the private ritual of shopping and seeing. Throughout the trilogy I have explored the idea of the artwork as commodity. In *Keela Mine* Chol is seduced by the glass satellite, which is made from ‘real artisan glass’ elevated as object through the congealed ‘type’ of labour. And in *Synophresia Nervosa*, seen in Figure 21, the objects become engaged in rituals and mimic body parts to parody the ‘sacred’ space of arts production. Because, for Benjamin, the traditional artwork like the commodity congeals bourgeois privilege into objects of beauty, which deflect the ruling ideology, it is only with the destruction of the artistic ‘aura’³⁷⁷ through technologies of reproduction that the artwork has the potential to become emancipated. This production and destruction of aura runs through the trilogy demonstrating how closely these two motions of creation and its encapsulation really are; the production of ‘organs’ (in their removal from the living body) only exists in relation to the destruction of the ‘extractee’, the production of art exists by Lox only can exist because of the destruction of her body. ‘Autonomous’ art may now be ‘free’ from social function but it is equally indebted to the institution of aesthetics as separate from ‘life’.³⁷⁸ If art is a commodity³⁷⁹ it then contains the hidden social life forms from whence it is produced – the congealed human labour. It is this human labour which returns in various forms to ‘haunt’ the video trilogy.

Accordingly, art’s position as both ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of the value form places it in a more precarious situ than other commodities. This is not to say that artistic labour is more exploited than the other types of labour detailed

³⁷⁴ Benjamin (1999:573)

³⁷⁵ Benjamin (1999:573)

³⁷⁶ Markus (2001)

³⁷⁷ Benjamin (2008)

³⁷⁸ See the discussion in Bürger (1984:36).

³⁷⁹ Martin (2007:18) ‘The artwork is presented as a contradiction produced by capitalism. Commodification is a condition of possibility of autonomous art and as well as a condition of its impossibility.’

throughout the trilogy. But it is to say, in terms of art's role in society, it being outside/inside of the value form, makes it simultaneously 'potentially' revolutionary and potentially subsumable. It is at the 'times' art is 'outside' the value-form that it is susceptible to new forms of exploitation and extraction.³⁸⁰ Ironically, it is also when art is 'outside' of the value-form that it is able to function autonomously and as potentially radical. As such, Gene Ray explains that 'culture' under capitalism tends to subvert artistic autonomy and accordingly radical autonomous art 'is always scarred by the dominant social logic it tries to refuse'.³⁸¹ Therefore as the lines between commodity and autonomy come closer together, in the interest of critique or assimilation, the artwork is the first to suffer. Ben Davis explains that often artists' commitment to 'aesthetic politics' is exactly what makes their work useful as a 'support of the hegemonic narrative of benevolent capitalist power'.³⁸² Marc James Léger also writes that the promotion and acceptance of art by the bourgeois elite, as a contained and consumable symbolic subversion, which is 'open to strangeness and foreignness and to innovation',³⁸³ actually depoliticizes artistic critique and consequently reaffirms art's original place as 'within' the ideological apparatus of the ruling class. Accordingly, art may be the 'ultimate' commodity but its 'use values' are often dematerialised as ideology. As Nicole Demby explains:

Art becomes a realm of abstract representation in which new subjectivities can hypothetically be imagined on a par with capital's own capacity to imagine them. In the boundlessness of this zone at its outer peripheries by the constraints of capitalist sociability, art acts as a container for this freedom. It is this art that resonates with the imaginary that serves as the symbolic – and legal – analogue of the capitalist state.³⁸⁴

Therefore, in order to conceptualise how artistic labour could be either the substance of extractive technique or the subject/object of extraction we must look further into the ideological construction of 'art'. In doing this we must

³⁸⁰ Here we could refer to writing on the reproductive sphere or on primitive accumulation.

³⁸¹ Ray (2011:175)

³⁸² See Davis (2013:68) in reference to Allora and Calzadilla's (2011) Venice Pavilion *Gloria*.

³⁸³ Léger (2011:84)

³⁸⁴ Demby (2015)

consider the separation of manual and intellectual labour, integral to art's position as ideological. Conceptual and post-conceptual practice questioned the constraints of 'craft' and manual labour in artistic practice.³⁸⁵ But, if we look further and consider both Adorno and Lukács' ideas of the pre-formed or reified subject, we can use the writing of Alfred Sohn-Rethel to understand how such a separation of intellectual and manual labour is embedded in the commodity exchange relationship of capitalism itself. This led me to consider, if conceptual art – through its separation of 'head and hand' restages the same separation that Sohn-Rethel identified as evolving from the idea of commodity abstraction.³⁸⁶ Lucy Lippard identifies the rejection of specific studio practices associated with making, and more often than not artistic 'technique', by conceptual practitioners working in the 1960s.³⁸⁷ However, as we know from subsequent and contemporaneous writers³⁸⁸ this 'de-skilling', to quote Roberts, was intentional, and, as he explains, related to a wider connection with the labour of those in industry. Conceptual art, however, did not seek to sever the head and hand but to find new techniques outside of the traditional regime and techniques of 'fine arts' to exercise its capacities. Ironically, subsequently many of the aesthetic forms of conceptual practice, have themselves become re-appropriated and commodified by capitalism.

³⁸⁵ See Roberts (2008)

³⁸⁶ Sohn-Rethel (1978)

³⁸⁷ Lippard (1999)

³⁸⁸ Atkinson and Burgin (1999)

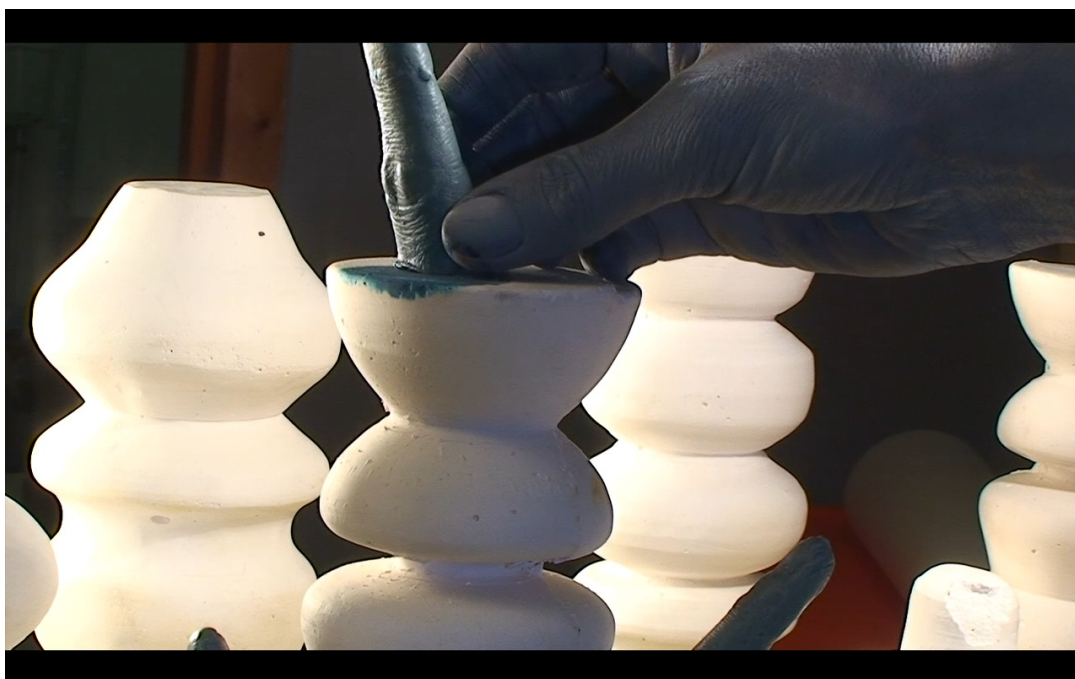


Fig 22. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

Sohn-Rethel identifies the epistemological roots of abstraction not in thought but in commodity exchange, taking up a historical materialist position on the grounds that nothing can be pulled out of thin air, or the mind. In explaining that ‘the philosophical tradition is itself a product of the division between mental and manual labour’³⁸⁹ he posits the cognitive ‘space’ that such a separation affords as distinct to capitalism. Sohn-Rethel asserts after Marx, that ‘a society in which the commodity exchange forms the *nexus rerum* is a purely abstract set of relations where everything concrete is in private hands’.³⁹⁰ The laws of private property Sohn-Rethel identifies as deriving from ‘the laws of *the separation* of exchange and use’³⁹¹ and it is this abstraction from use which has become ‘an objective social law’,³⁹² a law which extends to the actions or labour of man, as ‘mans imagination grows more and more separate from his actions and becomes increasingly individualised, eventually assuming the dimensions of a private consciousness’.³⁹³ Meaning that ‘in exchange, *the action is social, the minds*

³⁸⁹ Sohn-Rethel (1978:19)

³⁹⁰ Sohn-Rethel

³⁹¹ Ibid (25)

³⁹² Ibid

³⁹³ Sohn-Rethel (1978:26)

are private³⁹⁴ and it is in the 'private minds' of the artist where we must consider 'the abstract intellect', or the so called 'pure understanding – the cognitive source of scientific knowledge'³⁹⁵ which Sohn-Rethel's identifies as an 'identical expression' of exchange.³⁹⁶ Because 'private property' governs the labour of production, manual labour is alienated and 'useless' allowing 'the ideal form of cognition through abstract concepts'³⁹⁷ to develop. The contradictory quality of the commodity money as both real thing and abstract idea can be read in both the artwork and the commodity labour-power. As Sohn-Rethel acknowledges using Plato, 'ideas' are immortal and exchange-value is indestructible, in its abstraction. These 'ideas' he argues (again after Marx) are capable of producing 'socially valid results', especially if understood as the 'social brain', as in Marx's notion of the general intellect, however he explains that capitalism:

uses individual minds as its representatives. Such a mind then acts *as the only one of its kind* excluding a plural in the same way as society and money cannot be more than 'single' at any time. A closer analysis would reveal that the 'transcendental unity of the self-consciousness', to use the Kantian expression...is itself an intellectual reflection of one of the elements of the exchange abstraction...the form of exchangeabilities of commodities...³⁹⁸ [Italics added]

This understanding is crucial, as although some argue that art is 'outside' of the value-form it would be hard to argue that it is outside of intellectual thought. Art as intellectual labour is still configured by 'the only one of its kind' thinking which further reduces it to the commodity abstraction as private property.³⁹⁹ Accordingly if the practice of art is 'separate' from manual labour it reinforces the dualism between head and hand, which Sohn-Rethel allied with class antagonism between capital and labour. Art then embodies the idea of exchange value without directly experiencing the forces of labour as

³⁹⁴ Sohn-Rethel (1978:29)

³⁹⁵ Sohn-Rethel (1978:34)

³⁹⁶ Lazzarato writes (2014:35) 'it is perhaps property rights that form the most successful individualising apparatuses of subjectivation. By dividing the assemblages into subject and objects'.

³⁹⁷ Sohn-Rethel (1978:61)

³⁹⁸ Sohn-Rethel (1978:77)

³⁹⁹ See Harney (2010) for a discussion around culture and commodity, where he explains that 'value as wealth and value as norm seem to co-exist in the cultural commodity...revealing not just the split between them, but the split within themselves' (p. 443).

commodity and surplus extraction.⁴⁰⁰ In acknowledging artistic production's relationship with the 'separation between head and hand' and then the value-form, I question the nature of 'individual' ideas in the first place. As if what I seek is to question whether 'ideas' can be extracted from artists, or if these ideas can be co-opted into either commodities or as vehicles of extraction themselves, then I must not begin with the artwork-as-commodity, but in the process of intellectual thought-as-abstraction.

However, artists have indeed embodied this contradiction in their work, by critiquing the commodity abstraction. We see this directly in 'capitalist realism' in work by K.P Brehmer, where Brehmer employs his 'haptic' skill as an artist to translate the abstract worlds of global finance capital into diagrams, and, in abstraction through minimalism in John Cage's atonal performances. It could be argued conversely, that in both Brehmer and Cage's practices, what we find is a synthesis of head and hand, idea and action. The significance, however, of these practices, must be understood in context of the politics of the time, where an idea of 'existing outside of capitalism', was experienced, imagined and understood. Artistic ideas as individual 'expressions' are, in many ways, easier to transmute into commodities or intellectual copyright, than a collective body of ideas. Where 'collectivity' or the collective as idea, has become popular in artistic practice, Sholette clarifies that 'real collectives' or collective practice in art is seldom realised.⁴⁰¹ Consequently could the artist collective embody the synthesis of manual and intellectual labour, thus providing a model for undoing the dualism? The collective Chto Delat successfully combine intellectual and manual labour into their practice and collaborative newspapers, which only exists as the sum total of the group, not individual authors. It is for this reason that intellectual and manual labour are brought together, even if in conflict, in the trilogy, not just through their representation, but in the methods I used to produce the videos.

⁴⁰⁰ See Tsogas (2012) 'The Commodity Form in Cognitive Capitalism' for a discussion on Sohn Rethel ideas in a contemporary context Culture.

⁴⁰¹ Sholette (2011)

2.1 Artistic Labour and Value

Taking on board these ideas around the commodity and art, I will extend the discussion to consider the contemporary artist and their relationship to value. Not to further understand artistic value as abstract process, but in simply asking 'how artists get paid',⁴⁰² and subsequently how this 'getting paid' has influenced how and what they produce.⁴⁰³ Drawing on examples from the video I explore the matrix of welfare, the *second economy of art* and the pressing issue of art and class.⁴⁰⁴ Art can and should become a 'speculative research programme',⁴⁰⁵ as ideally artistic labour is 'free' labour that is not constrained by the working day and time-as-measure. However what is produced in this 'free' sphere is still available to be subsumed by capital and the impetus for 'self-production' is itself a product of entrepreneurial logic.⁴⁰⁶ Artists are 'paying' for their 'free' time in employment in what Sholette and Roberts have described as the 2nd economy of art.⁴⁰⁷ In these part-time jobs artist's labour is at the mercy of the value form, and, it is in their 'own' time where they make their work.⁴⁰⁸ It is for this reason that I see artists and art as particularity vulnerable, and accordingly precarious. For this reason artists must constantly negotiate their relationship with labour and the economy, and artistic practice must encapsulate the critique of art's subsumption, and circulation in the ongoing 'dry goods' market. The artist may, in her position as part-time worker, be allied with the proletariat,⁴⁰⁹ and at times this consciousness generates feelings of solidarity. But 'artists' on the whole, could be seen to epitomise Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's 'multitude': an atomised conglomerate of different classes and identities,⁴¹⁰ who aim on the whole for individual recognition. They are the eternal 'un-alienated-alienated'

⁴⁰² See Huws (2010) 'Expression and Expropriation: The Dialectics of Autonomy and Control in Creative Labour' for an analysis of 'creative labour' and a very adept summary of the video trilogy.

⁴⁰³ See the group 'Like a Rolling Stone' a Turkish collective who work primarily on questions about art and labour: <http://laborincontemporaryart.wordpress.com/about/>

⁴⁰⁴ For an interesting analysis of art and surplus value see Diedrichsen (2008), but this analysis fails to address the main component of surplus, which is labour, instead focusing on the art as commodity, in terms of price, and circulation, and the artist, as I explore in the next chapter, as embodying their own constant capital.

⁴⁰⁵ Roberts (2015b)

⁴⁰⁶ McRobbie (2011), Sholette (2011), and originally Foucault (2008).

⁴⁰⁷ Roberts (2010) Sholette (2011)

⁴⁰⁸ The artist's cultural capital is often, as sociologist Pascal Gielen (2009) aptly surmises, about 'being seen on the scene'. Reiterated in a critique of Isabell Graw's writing on the art scene by Ester Leslie (2011). Also see Harvie and de Angelis (2009:17), where they explain how the nature of academic labour means that ideas can come to you at any time of the day, and therefore how do we quantify the time spent on these ideas.

⁴⁰⁹ Roberts (2010)

⁴¹⁰ Hardt and Negri (2005)

subject. The discourse of 'self entrepreneurialism' maintains the artist's constant negotiation outside of the artistic sphere, and as such there exists an internalised drive to succeed and better her peers. The 'artisans' in *Synophresia Nervosa*, however, receive a 'fee', which we hear was "set up during the enterprise years". They are entangled within a web of what would be called cultural or social services.

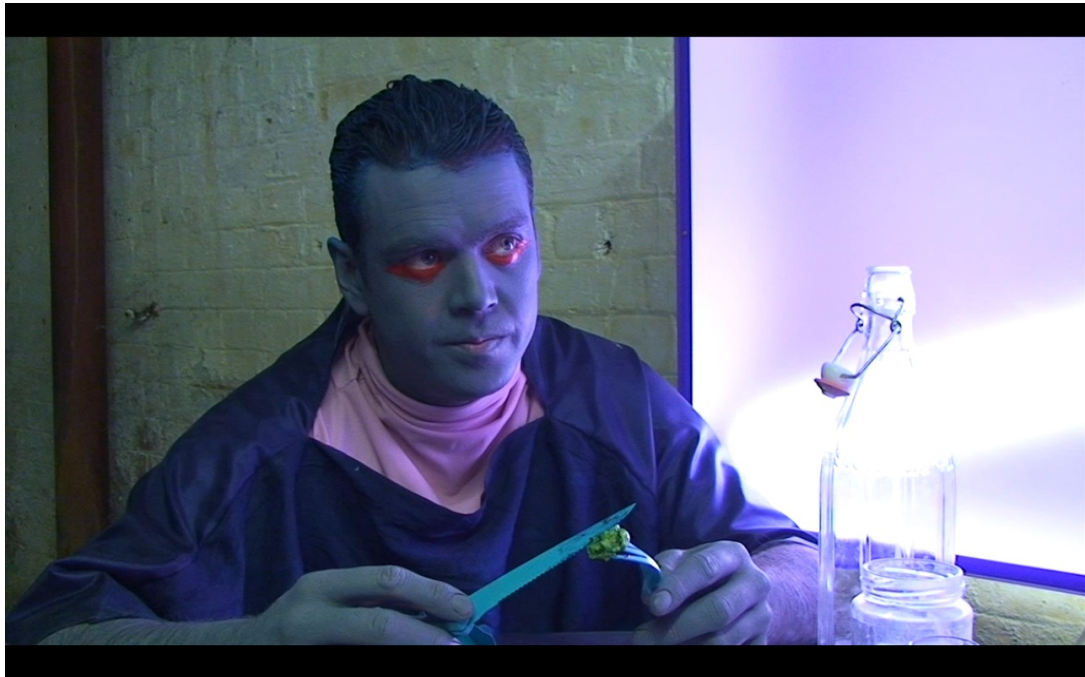


Fig 23. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

Now let us conceptualise this fictional 'fee' the artisans receive in relation to autonomous art and the welfare state, and the 'second economy' of art. The welfare state in the global North (although minimal) alongside part-time jobs in and around the art industry consequently acts as a kind of surrogate 'fee' for the contemporary artist. The artisan's fee in *Synophresia Nervosa* is minimal, and artisans are still compelled to remain in debt to make their work, as we hear when Erosa explains: "I have debts I am paying off on a weekly basis, because of material costs". This financial 'burden' of art comes from my own experience of contemporary art world conditions, where artists use credit cards to buy materials, and accrue student loans for education costs, such as the dubious 'career development loan'⁴¹¹ offered by banks for

⁴¹¹ Offered by most major banks in the UK from £3-10,000, for training and development – paid back after the training is finished, at around 6%.

students to cover masters fees, with the loan then paid back at standard loan rates after the course is finished. However I must add that this must be understood in context. The artisans, as we see above in Figure 23, are able to 'afford' to eat out, no matter how 'inedible' it may be, and in many ways represent, as Max Henninger states, a 'worker's aristocracy'.⁴¹² However, debt, as described by Lazzarato is still a major factor in the lives of many artists. Debt also props up the arts sector, where we see minimally paid staff or unpaid interns comprising the majority of labour in both industry and academies.⁴¹³ The 'funded' PhD researcher (myself one) who works for below minimum wage 'researching' for the University is also an increasing category of creative labour. A friend of mine represents the 'latest' model of this: the university is charging her fees to do a PhD in one of their specific research projects (she is literally paying them to work), subsidising the university with free labour and paying her bills, through her night shift work. Another important issue to think about in relation to art and value is the way that a 'trickle down' economy of art functions, the 'unseen' class-based economy of creatives (artists, writers, musicians, and performers) who rely on funding from family remittances or inheritances constitutes a growing proportion of creative labour. This 'trickle-down effect' moves through generations of affluence. Max Henninger explains that the 'cogni-tariat' constituted by 'students, freelancers, artists, and writers' 'are certainly not privileged in terms of their conditions of employment'⁴¹⁴ but because of parental support and the nature of their employment itself are on the whole not a disenfranchised class of workers.

This does not mean that artists are not in a position to question or rally against contemporary working conditions, but it does make a case for questioning how the art world is able to continue to function permitting us to ask; where is the money coming from? Consequently if artists are indirectly still instituted in bourgeois patronage, then issues of class and art are relevant when discussing art and value. This contradiction along with the split

⁴¹² Henninger (2007:173)

⁴¹³ See Steyerl (2012) and Ross (2009) 'Nice Work If You Can Get It' for the exploitation of unpaid intern labour in the cultural sector.

⁴¹⁴ Henninger (2007)

in artists between profession and vocation is reflected in the split between manual and intellectual labour, and contributes to the contradictory nature of artistic labour and consequently class identity. However what Roberts,⁴¹⁵ Sholette,⁴¹⁶ Dimitrakaki,⁴¹⁷ and to a degree Hardt and Negri⁴¹⁸ have suggested, is that with the increasing proliferation or 'massification' of the artist there is revolutionary potential. If such potentialities for collectivization exist why are they the exception, not the rule? The answer may be located within Marx's analysis of political economy that artists cannot be in themselves revolutionary, as they are not proletarianised – and because their labour is un-alienated cannot become so. If artists do not collectivize under the current fragmented combination of welfare, part-time work, family patronage and poor sales we must, assume that such conditions do not warrant a collectivised resistance. Could this be because such labour 'appears' autonomous, and consequently could art's 'autonomous' nature be as much of a ball and chain within capitalism as it is its 'liberator'?

2.3 Art and Reproduction

The contradictory nature of creative labour means that in order to understand these paradoxes it is important to consider labour that falls outside of the wage relationship, and outside of the sphere of the production of commodities. This led me to consider whether social reproduction could become a more useful analytic tool for understanding extraction and artistic production. In conceptualising *Synophresia Nervosa*, I asked; could the process of reproduction 'give birth' to a commodity? If a commodity holds inside it the value of the labour expended in it, how can we re-evaluate the commodity or art object (for the sake of this discussion I have summoned their interchange-ability), considering the amount of reproductive time spent making it? For example, if I spend the hours after 'work' making a piece of art, does it either a) not enter into the exchange value relation, as it is not

⁴¹⁵ Roberts (2015)

⁴¹⁶ Sholette (2011)

⁴¹⁷ Dimitrakaki (2013b)

⁴¹⁸ Hardt and Negri (2005)

constrained by the time-as-measure relationship and thus not a commodity (or art-work)? Or b) does it contain the ‘devalued’ labour of the reproductive ‘time’ (the time which we; love, eat, sleep, pray, give birth) and, accordingly, it is non-commoditised labour?⁴¹⁹ Although if we consider the permeation of the logic of accumulation into ‘personal time’, do we not have to re-assess the significance of this labour and the things it produces (be it dinner, washing up, sewing, making art, digging a garden). Given that it is harder to distinguish between labour time and leisure time, due to the changing nature of ‘work’,⁴²⁰ how do we re-evaluate the commodity or the artwork?

In order to understand what is meant by social reproduction, one must understand the way that it differs from production ‘proper’, and in relation to my research I could also ask, how do such divisions relate to the idea of extraction? We know that Marx’s definition of production relies on the creation of value, and the extraction of surplus, and this he specifically outlines in relationship to industrial and primarily factory production. Social reproduction is all of the activities that take place outside of this working time, and historically on the side of both capitalism and the left, we see this sphere being undervalued, where production is prioritised. However we can rightly ask how relevant these two distinctions currently are. Especially in a time where this primary example of factory-based production is not characteristic of most labour in the global North, it has become in many ways exceptional. This is not to argue that it has disappeared, as I explained in Chapter One, but if the question of this section is to consider the relationship of art to production/reproduction, I must rightly consider the spaces where most art is predominantly made, bought, sold and institutionalised. If we have moved into a phase of which Dimitrakaki describes as ‘total production’ where ‘everything is production’,⁴²¹ the strict definitions that Daniel Spaulding, along with others,⁴²² make in their writing on art and value that ‘artistic labour is not subject to the rationality of socially necessary labour time’ seem fastidious

⁴¹⁹ Here we could consider Hannah Arendt’s (1998) discussion on the difference between work and labour, or between productive and unproductive labour.

⁴²⁰ See Ursula Huws ‘The Making of the Cybertariat’ for a discussion around labour and the computer, but also Cognitive Capitalist arguments about the transformation of work under post-Fordism – Vercellone (2006) and Virno (2007).

⁴²¹ Dimitrakaki (2014)

⁴²² Spaulding (2015) Beech (2015), Roberts (2015)

and unhelpful in understanding the relationship between culture and value. However where I do insist, or reclaim the usefulness of such terms is under the presumption that if everything is production – art, love, eating – then we either have no time/space that is outside of capital, and all activities are transformed into profit making activities, which is beneficial for capital, or we have a unique situation, under the real subsumption of life, where all activities can provide the basis for a resistance and, therefore, their removal from capital entirely. However I do still entertain the spheres of production and reproduction as conceptually separate throughout the research. This is to understand how post-Fordist transformations have affected cultural production and work in general, but I am working towards the idea of extraction under ‘total production’ as an endpoint.

In the video *Synophresia Nervosa* there is no ‘work’ (both life-work and art-work) born outside of reproductive time. The scenes with Lycian and Erosa are all of a ‘personal’ nature, and the scenes with Lox reveal how she clearly ‘transcends’ the normative behaviours of an ‘artist at work’ and, accordingly, she exists in a time ‘outside’ of capital – that is in a state of madness.⁴²³ The scenes inside the ‘ideas lab’ where the commodity of ‘ideas’ is harnessed, again does not exploit productive labour time, but ‘requests’ that the artisans volunteer to “feed back into the bank”. They are indebted to the Tem, and these debts, incurred in their reproductive time, are now paid back through a temporary incitement of madness through a biomechanical appendage. *Synophresia Nervosa* seeks to highlight the slippery divisions between production and reproduction, but also of value itself, in terms of the value of subjectivity itself, once it is, extracted, commoditised and transformed into work.

In reflecting on this ‘relocation’ of artistic labour into reproductive time, I want to consider Marxist Feminist readings of the relationship between production and reproduction or productive and unproductive labour and how this is useful in understanding a transformation in art production.⁴²⁴ It was in the

⁴²³ In this I refer to the way the neoliberal state has imposed expanding and retracting regulations on mental illness.

⁴²⁴ See Vishmidt (2011) for a good analysis of the aims and objectives of the Autonomia feminist theorists and Vishmidt’s (2013) interview with Silvia Federici for an update on concerns regarding reproduction.

domain of reproduction ‘proper’ – of child birth and rearing that feminist theorists located a terrain of unseen social and economic exploitation; a zone of invisible extraction and corporeal exploitation.⁴²⁵ The trilogy of videos takes on board what could be seen as a global ‘condition’ of reproduction, or more importantly the limits imposed on reproduction by the coercive laws of capital. As even if we can speak about ‘total production’ we must still acknowledge the ways in which capital valorises previously free domains of reproduction. Consequently I propose that artists have moved from a preoccupation with spaces of production, for example Andy Warhol’s ‘Factory’, the Artist Placement Groups residencies in industry, the employment of industrial techniques in sculptural work, and most directly the employment of the ‘readymade’⁴²⁶ to the sphere of reproduction.⁴²⁷ This could be argued to follow on from the ‘deindustrialisation’ of the global North. But it could also be read as a reaction by artists to the further commodification of the reproductive sphere, especially under ‘austerity’ capitalism, where the politics that define current struggles are around state provisions to reproduction. Therefore if the artwork is just one step ahead of the commodity, it would then surely respond to this expanding capacity of commodification. Here I am considering the idea that art has since the 1970s moved spheres and also considering how social reproduction or in fact ‘total production’ provides a more suitable category for artistic production. Because as Spaulding after Marx explains, artistic labour creates ‘no value’ directly, and while it is affected by the numerous constraints imposed by a capitalist society, it, like reproduction is not directly, but indirectly ‘productive.’⁴²⁸ Art as reproduction is expressed in a variety of ways, for example the ‘social artwork’ discussed in the previous chapter. These social works are predominantly concerned with subjects who are outside of the productive sphere, and often take the form of reproductive activities: eating, drinking, school, education, the environment, housing, and sleeping. These spheres have not only become part of artistic ‘projects’ and thus technique, they now

⁴²⁵ Fortunati (1996) Della Costa (2004), Mies (1999), Federici (2012)

⁴²⁶ John Roberts (2008) discusses the solidarity of the readymade with the factory worker – in a move to de-skill artistic labour.

⁴²⁷ See Vishmidt (2013) for discussion around art and social reproduction: <http://www.openspace-zkp.org/2013/en/journal.php?i=4&t=25>

⁴²⁸ See Marx (1976) and or for a wider discussion see Arendt (1998).

form part of the content and politics of the work.⁴²⁹ Artists also make work in their reproductive time, as I explained in the previous section, and therefore have historically represented a model of the subjective worker who objectifies their subjectivity at the point of ‘creation’. However by following Marx and denying the ‘productive’ capacity of art, and culture, we are denying, or in fact ignoring major spheres of the economy, that do rely on the ‘productive’ capacity of creative labour, and this is without mentioning the role of social reproduction too.

Because the sphere of reproduction constitutes a meeting point between the biological necessities of life and wider cultural constructions it is conceptually and physically ‘messy’. Certain components like birth and reproduction cannot be easily reduced to commodities or removed as unnecessary for the capitalist mode of production. For this reason they have been controlled,⁴³⁰ shaped by the needs of capital and progressively commodified.⁴³¹ Silvia Federici’s writing on women’s bodies during witch hunts is one historical example, but a more recent United States law prohibiting women from refusing to have a Caesarean section if doctors request it. This treats women’s bodies as the carrier of the labour power of the future,⁴³² and does not give women the right to determine this procedure or have control over their own bodies.⁴³³ Education and mental health⁴³⁴ are increasingly being transformed not only with the logic of accumulation but the logic of transforming social processes into quantifiable norms and outcomes through increasing biopower.⁴³⁵ As Penzin explains, ‘the emerging medicalization of sleep disorders has become a new site of “biocapital” accumulation.’⁴³⁶ The importance of these particular sites of bodily organisation and control, which are outside of the sphere of production, is that we witness a twofold process: firstly the control of subjects to become or continue to be better workers for

⁴²⁹ This could also be understood in the context of the ‘housewifization’ (Mies 1999) which is discussed by Fuchs (2014:239) in regard to call centres, could this term be used to consider changes in types of artistic labour, with the domestic site increasingly being employed to make, and show art, as institutional support wanes in the face of increasing ‘austerity’.

⁴³⁰ Foucault (1990)

⁴³¹ See George Caffentzis (2014) ‘On the notion of a Crisis of Social Reproduction’.

⁴³² Fortunati (1996)

⁴³³ Valenti (2014)

⁴³⁴ Fisher (2009:16-20) in *Capitalist Realism*.

⁴³⁵ Foucault (2008)

⁴³⁶ Penzin (2012)

capital, and secondly the transformation of spheres outside of capital into value producing activities.⁴³⁷ For this reason Lox 'gives birth' to her work (seen in Figure 24), and sacrifices her body for her work. This translation of the processes to and from commodification through the production of art, demystifies the space of the studio. The way women's bodies have been used historically, 'cut up' and performed in art work⁴³⁸ as objects of extraction or as sites of contestation with capital through performance directly informed *Synophresia Nervosa*.⁴³⁹ The sacrificial is both mimetic and generative, meaning the exploitation of extraction is externalised, it now functions autonomously.



Fig 24. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

The identification of domestic and reproductive work as labour, and as necessary for the capitalist mode of production, meant that Italian Marxist Feminists were able to reconceptualise work in the home as contingent with labour in the factory. Leopoldina Fortunati writes in the *Arcane of Reproduction* (1996) that women as domestic workers are in fact indirectly waged workers, supervised by their husbands, and any value they create, is

⁴³⁷ See Endnotes 'The Logic of Gender; and the 'two spheres', but also Huws (2014).

⁴³⁸ Steyerl (2012)

⁴³⁹ See Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975) alongside more contemporary performance works by Andrea Fraser *Untitled* (2003), Oreet Ashrey *Strange Acts* (2008), and the collective Voina *How to Snatch a Chicken* (2010), which all attempt in some way to disrupt the social norms imposed on the female body as reproductive organ or unpaid labourer.

in fact hidden from view in the capitalist society, as the individual no longer holds value.⁴⁴⁰ Silvia Federici asks why ‘Marx so persistently ignores women’s reproductive work?’ and explains that a belief in science, technology and what constitutes work has sustained the avoidance of the question of reproduction in subsequent Marxist thinking.⁴⁴¹ Marina Vishmidt in explaining the Autonomist Feminists position writes that:

“women’s issues” could be more broadly addressed as “class issues” and understood as antagonistic to capitalist interests in the same way as the issues of waged workers. Another reason was to actualize reproduction – childcare, health care, prostitution, power relations in the home and community – as a properly political site of contestation.⁴⁴²

This position reformulates reproduction as productive, and rejects the historical division that naturalised the oppression of women. It also negates the claim that art has moved ‘spheres’ as it insists that both spheres are productive for capital. For if reproduction is productive, then if art is reproductive it must be productive and thus attached in some ways to exchange value. But if we consider that reproduction (like art) is harder to ‘control’ and quantify in terms of ‘value’, this means that it contains a quality, which is un-valorizable and consequently always just outside of capital. This could be described by art’s ‘exceptional’ character. Yet we know that spheres outside of the value form are not immune to the persistent logic of accumulation and extraction and relying on art’s ‘exceptionality’ seems naïve given the encroaching forces of total production. Dimitrakaki points out, discussing Hester Eisenstein, that ‘woman’s entry into paid labour coincided with...the reconfiguration of late twentieth century capitalism as a service economy of flexible and part-time workers.’⁴⁴³ This also corresponds to shifts in art (discussed in the previous Chapter) and the commoditisation of ‘services’ or affective labour.⁴⁴⁴ The significance of these movements is complex, with domestic or affective labour becoming increasingly ‘liberated’

⁴⁴⁰ Fortunati (1996)

⁴⁴¹ The work that Federici (2004), Fortunati (1996), Della Costa (2004) and Mies (1999) have done on reinterpreting the role of reproduction in the system of capitalist production goes some ways to make up for this. Also see Hannah Arendt (1996) for an earlier discussion around productive and unproductive labour.

⁴⁴² Vishmidt (2011)

⁴⁴³ Dimitrakaki (2013:36-37)

⁴⁴⁴ Hardt (1999) ‘Affective Labour’.

as wage labour, a contradiction unfolds. With the 'emancipation' of reproductive labour into the 'productive' or waged sphere, there is simultaneously an alienation of reproductive labour and the subsumption of reproductive labour under exchange value. Accordingly, artists who fight to be 'paid' and for their labour to be acknowledged, risk experiencing the same fate as female reproductive work – which can be either 'real slavery' or wage slavery. Vishmidt clearly summarises this contradiction here:

Post-autonomous Marxism says; all is work; Feminism says: this is also work; Conceptual Art says: anything can be art; Feminist Art says: this work is also art, then we can start to see the production of 'abstract labour' as a common thread between these...The potential of anything to be work, and the potential of anything which is not work to be art, and the dominance of the value-form that produce both as inverted images of the other highlight that the expansion and intensification of both can be traced to capital as the ultimate self-valorising subject...⁴⁴⁵

While autonomous artistic labour has previously been divorced from direct use-values,⁴⁴⁶ and domestic or affective labour could be said to be all use-value, it is important to note that both versions of 'uses' or accordingly 'exchanges' are hard to quantify. Endnotes argue that there is no easy way to quantify reproductive activities, and because of the shift of many reproductive tasks to the service economy, the terms production/reproduction are no longer useful and consequently seek to 'differentiate reproduction that is commodified, monetised, or mass produced from that which is not'.⁴⁴⁷ With regard to this articulation we can also ask, which aspects, and for what reasons is reproduction being commodified, which leads to the question of where extraction takes place today outside of the wage relationship?

Labour power as commodity is unique; to quote Endnotes an 'ontological split exists because labour-power is neither a person nor just a commodity'.⁴⁴⁸ In its incompleteness, the sphere of reproduction and artistic labour occupy a contradictory position in relation to capital. This does not mean that they are

⁴⁴⁵ Vishmidt (2010:318)

⁴⁴⁶ See Adorno (2002) and Bürger (1984) who cite the separation of art from its specific cultural logics in the modern period.

⁴⁴⁷ Endnotes (2013) 'The Logic of Gender'.

⁴⁴⁸ Endnotes (2013)

free from the constraints of capitalist production and accumulation. Fortunati explains the counter movement between what she sees as the increased mechanisation of the 'affective' part of reproduction and the stagnation involved in the attempt to mechanise the 'productive' or material part of reproduction.⁴⁴⁹ She cites the increase in devices for entertaining children, and other communicative ICTs as currently dominating the lived domestic sphere. The tasks of cleaning and cooking are increasingly 'outsourced' to third party labour, but she explains that there have not been any major technological developments in domestic appliances since the 1960s.⁴⁵⁰ Fortunati locates this shift in the commodification of the affective parts of labour with the spread of immaterial labour in the global North, and explains how the blurring between work and life, under the immaterial thesis, has made this transition possible and consequently profitable in a post-industrial society. John Roberts writes that 'the waking cycle of reproduction/production-production/reproduction is subject continuously to the value-form.'⁴⁵¹ It is for this reason that artistic labour; love-friendship and reproduction are all explored with increasing interchangeably in *Synophresia Nervosa*. I am simultaneously pointing to a condition of total production, and to the increasing relevance of what could be described as total extraction. In witnessing these contradictory elements, as we see in Figure 25, and then their instant co-option or extraction, we can glimpse the potential of autonomy enacted in creative labour, or its subsumption by capital.

⁴⁴⁹ Fortunati (2007) 'Immaterial Labour and its Mechanisation'.

⁴⁵⁰ Fortunati (2007)

⁴⁵¹ Roberts (2013) 'Art and the Problem of Immaterial Labour'.



Fig 25. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

2.4 Art and Body and Soul

Has a 'self sacrificing' attitude to work been historically de rigour for artists? And has this attitude to work now permeated into all types of labour?⁴⁵² Because artists utilise their subjective/ intellectual knowledge as material in the production of work, and embody the costs of production simultaneously, they are the ideal model of 'immaterial labour'.⁴⁵³ The artist feels justified in sacrificing her 'time'. What I want to suggest is that the artist offers up, not the liberated idea of un-alienated labour, but the reverse – the ultimate embodiment of subject/body machine for capital.⁴⁵⁴ She is willing to not eat or sleep for her work, and this sacrifice is embodied, not in a logic of economy, but an ideology of 'creativity'.⁴⁵⁵ We might then ask what constitutes artistic surplus labour: is there a correlation between the mechanisms of artistic labour and the mechanism for extraction itself? For example let us consider a 'freelance' writer or artist (consider Steyerl's dual meaning of the word:

⁴⁵² This exposition developed from Operaismo: Tronti (1966) and Negri (1988).

⁴⁵³ Lazzarato (1996)

⁴⁵⁴ Melanie Gilligan describes this in relation to 'total social capital' in an interview as part of her exhibition *Popular Unrest* (2010) at the Chisenhale Gallery.

⁴⁵⁵ This idea is deconstructed in various forms in the book (2009) *Critique of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity, and Resistance in the 'Creative Industries'* edited by Gerald Raunig, Gene Ray and Ulf Wuggenig.

mercenary/precariat worker⁴⁵⁶) who writes or makes work unpaid in their own time, and then either sells their work, or 'donates' it to magazines, journals, websites and, public/private galleries. The question arises, at what point is a surplus extracted from the writer/artist? It is difficult as there is no distinct working day, as 'post-Fordist'⁴⁵⁷ techniques have expanded into the full 24 hours. If the publication or gallery is 'not for profit' it could be argued that no surplus is ever extracted, but we know that if the writer/artist is not paid for the job, she must be paid for something (a job in a cafe maybe?), so at some point in her day a surplus is taken. Therefore it is this 'opening up' or de-territorialisation of temporal zones of extraction, which must be taken on board when considering creative or artistic extraction.⁴⁵⁸ In this way artists are continually being extracted from as their work enters circulation, and even makes a profit for someone somewhere. But the spatial/temporal construction of 'the factory'⁴⁵⁹ has broken down into such a fragmented state that it is often the artist who 'gives up' her time/energy into a much wider frame of capital as *total social capital*, and the embodiment of life as work.⁴⁶⁰

Surplus labour time – is all the time which the worker works and when no payment is given. Because artistic labour is hard to quantify⁴⁶¹ (in terms of a beginning and end), and because the wider infrastructures of the neoliberal system have set up sophisticated 'nets' that catch value without needing to impose the factory system,⁴⁶² this 'surplus' could be read as a 'general' surplus. The artist pays for her own constant capital – all material costs are 'outsourced' to the artist. While I do not deny or ignore the global continuation of the factory labour system proper as extractive of surplus value, I do recognize that capitalist accumulation must continually diversify in the face of changing global dynamics of labour.

⁴⁵⁶ Steyerl (2012)

⁴⁵⁷ See theories of cognitive capitalism by Vercellone and Berardi and to a degree Virno, and the subsequent critiques by Caffentzis (2013) and Tony Smith (2013).

⁴⁵⁸ I explore this idea of temporal zones under global time in Chapters One and Three.

⁴⁵⁹ Tronti (1966)

⁴⁶⁰ This is taken from Operaismo's ideas around the social factory, and specifically Tronti's (1966) writing around the wider institutions of capital. For a discussion around the shifting place of work and politics in post-Fordism see Lotringer and Marazzi (1980).

⁴⁶¹ de Angelis and Harvie (2009)

⁴⁶² This idea is from Hardt and Negri (2005) and then further developed by Vercellone (2007).



Fig 26. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2)

To consider both points I return to *Synophresia Nervosa*, evidenced in Figure 26, where the labour of the artisans is transformed (by the state) into alienated labour, and the construction of a subject is called into question through its removal. Berardi and Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello⁴⁶³ identify the way desire and alienation were key components of the 1960s artistic and theoretical critique.⁴⁶⁴ This search for an 'authentic' self or 'un-alienated' subjectivity is considered problematic for both. Berardi (after Baudrillard) reminds us that 'creative desire produces infinite structures, and among them even those functioning as apparatuses of repression',⁴⁶⁵ this being because 'desire is the driving force of capital's development.'⁴⁶⁶ Alternatively Boltanski and Chiapello explain that the search for 'authenticity', in the individual self, enabled the further commoditisation of 'life-style' spheres.⁴⁶⁷ What the above authors identify in their observations is the increasing role that the 'subject' or subjectivity is playing in systems of capitalist extraction. Jason Read recognises the missing component between the subject and extraction in Marx's analysis of capital, and while the subject can be understood through

⁴⁶³ See Boltanski and Chiapello (2006)

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid

⁴⁶⁵ Berardi (2009:177)

⁴⁶⁶ Berardi (2009:177)

⁴⁶⁷ Lazzarato (2010) however argues that this 'artistic critique' is misplaced and clearly identifies the imposed conditions of entrepreneurialism and precarity onto artists, rather than the 'artistic critique' being assumed by capital.

the 'immanent causality' caused by the changes to the mode of production under capitalism and Marx's identification of a new subject formed by class struggle and alienation, Read asserts that nowhere do we find the tools in *Capital* to understand how the ongoing production of subjectivity functions under capitalism.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore Read turns to post-structuralism, most specifically Foucault, to understand the way that the subject functions and is formed under capital:

In Foucault's later works, the immanence of the production of subjectivity to power and knowledge relations is paired with an increasing insistence on the irreducibility of subjectivity to the conditions of its production...Subjectivity is not exterior to the relations of power, but it constitutes an added dimension...⁴⁶⁹

Read then develops what he sees as the contradiction of subjectivity under capital in relation to Marx's theories of subsumption:

Unlike the fixed capital of machinery, subjectivity is either outside of direct control of capital, as in the city, or is disseminated across social space...At the same time, however, subjectivity as fixed capital would seem to be entirely interior to capital – produced by capital as a functional component.⁴⁷⁰

This position of subjectivity being both *outside* of capital, but constituted *by* capital is what led theorists to address what they saw as the subjective, intellectual, or cognitive component of capitalism in post-Fordism. Stefano Lucarelli and Vercellone explain that:

the approach of cognitive capitalism places knowledge at the heart of the concrete historical development of conflictual relations of knowledge and power that have forged the development of the capitalist division of labour and the transformation of the wage relation.⁴⁷¹

And therefore by focusing on the cognitive component of capitalism you are directly addressing this same contradiction explicated by Read, in the creation of subjectivity as both exterior and interior to capital. This relates

⁴⁶⁸ Read (2004)

⁴⁶⁹ Read (2004:89)

⁴⁷⁰ Read (2004:132)

⁴⁷¹ Lucarelli and Vercellone (2014:8), see also Corsani (2002) and Fumagalli and Lucarelli (2007) for further explication of the model of cognitive capitalism.

directly to what Sohn-Rethel explains regarding intellectual thought, and more pertinently the very idea that an idea, or cognate cannot be produced outside of a subjectivity, hence why the domain of the subject could be capital's new domain for control and extraction. Accordingly Berardi locates the concept of cognitive capitalism in relation to the construction of the 'soul':

Industrial factories used the body, forcing it to leave the soul outside of the assembly line, so that the worker looked like a soulless body. The immaterial factory asks instead to place our very souls at its disposal: intelligence, sensibility, creativity, and language.⁴⁷²

Here subjectivity becomes entangled in the semiotic and linguistic flows that make up 'cognitive capitalism' or the 'knowledge economy'. In this we must recognise that the very concept of individual subjectivity is being redeployed as an extractive technique. However as Tiziana Terranova writes there is an internal contradiction in the 'cognitive capitalism' model, between, 'exploitation, subsumption, and proletarianization on the one side, and autonomy, self-reference and self creation on the other.'⁴⁷³ In placing emphasis on the affective, linguistic and symbolic aspects of capital, Terranova explains that we ignore the productive and machinist components of capitalism. Lazzarato also contests the cognitive capitalism thesis that emphasises "knowledge" as the origin of valorization and exploitation⁴⁷⁴ and instead identifies the creation of the economic subject who takes on board the risks and costs of a failing system of capitalist production.⁴⁷⁵ Lazzarato explains that under capitalism: 'enslavement does not work with "subjects" and "objects" (as commodities), it works on their deterritorialization (or their decodification) that is with...subhuman potentialities of subjectivity'.⁴⁷⁶ This new 'subjectivity' is no longer tied to the individual but 'torn to pieces' by the machine.⁴⁷⁷ Alberto Toscano has further argued that Post-Operaismo has made too much of the 'subject', and questions whether capitalism is really as

⁴⁷² Berardi (2009:192)

⁴⁷³ Terranova (2013)

⁴⁷⁴ Lazzarato (2011:50)

⁴⁷⁵ There are also a range of works which seek to critique cognitive capitalism – see Caffentzis (2013) and Smith (2013).

⁴⁷⁶ Lazzarato (2014:27)

⁴⁷⁷ This Lazzarato (2014) has taken from Deleuze and Guatarri (1983).

‘interested’ in the subject as theories of cognitive capitalism claim.⁴⁷⁸ Jodi Dean reiterates this by suggesting that such a position attributes too much cognitive power to a system which is primarily economic.⁴⁷⁹ This means that under capitalism, the primacy of exchange value and accumulation do not always lead to more ‘clever’ forms of extraction⁴⁸⁰ and therefore resistance.⁴⁸¹



Fig 27. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

I suggest, however, that by understanding the ways in which the subject is de-subjectified into the machine, we witness an affirmation of the diversification of mechanisms of extraction. If prioritising cognitive labour or affective labour, over mass productive labour in the global South, can be read as detrimental to the overall picture of global capitalism, it does allow us to begin to make sense of the very real changes we have experienced in the global North over the last 30 years. The problem of the ‘subject’ could be

⁴⁷⁸ Toscano (2013) (2007)

⁴⁷⁹ Dean (2013)

⁴⁸⁰ See Scientific American (October 2013) ‘who will bankroll the next big idea’ for a discussion on how capitalism is dumbing down.

⁴⁸¹ There are many critiques of the theories of cognitive capitalism, often launched at Vercellone, see for example Smith (2013) and Caffentzis (2013). Having read the critiques against, I agree in part, especially in terms of the ‘real’ productive nature of labour globally. Although, as I will explain in the next Chapter, there is a ‘cognitive’ component to relative surplus extraction which is worth investigating in and understanding further – meaning I am by no means throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

read as a 'bourgeois' problem,⁴⁸² but this does not mean that it must be ignored, and its continual interrogation is imperative if cultural production is to be a site for contestation. Because while the labour underpinning capital may remain productive, if we take for example Apple computers, produced in China, their use, distribution, and branding are co-existive components in a logic of accumulation, that require 'cognitive' labour to put them into practice.⁴⁸³ In this we should remember that Apple began its path to corporate world dominance on the back of the cachet attached to its use by artists, designers and architects.

The alienation the contemporary subject suffers from is not the 'loss' of some historic authentic self, but outcome of the re-conceptualisation of the subject within exchange value and the quantification of subjectivity in the performance of work. Capital could be said to create and destroy the 'authentic' subject in order to extract value. This schizophrenic⁴⁸⁴ process which both separates (like surplus value) and makes whole, leaves the characters in the video in a state of what I call: 'synophresia nervosa', a condition where all real/imagined phenomena and senses are fused and split again and again, leaving a feeling of both longing (for wholeness) and a desire for sacrifice or be split in two. This condition represents both the embodiment of ideas of the individual (with his or her needs and identity) and the contradictory abstract 'whole' of capitalism. The personal (interior) subject of the artisan in *Synophresia Nervosa* becomes the content for advertising, which then sells the idea of subjectivity, or a specific kind of subjectivity, back to the subject, in a continual loop.⁴⁸⁵ Those like Lox who have been attending the lab for longer (see Figure 27) experience a much faster loop, and amalgamate their own dreams with the ones used in the advertisements, which induces a sense of collapsed time, and a collective subjectivity 'we all feel what I feel'. *Synophresia Nervosa* is experienced as the blurring of all senses, this taken from synaesthesia, but not only our biological senses, but

⁴⁸² See Chukhrov (2008) 'The Critique of "General Intellect"' where Chukhrov is critical of Post-Operaismo's acceptance of the concept of the general intellect as it leads to 'yet another bourgeois revolution' in theory.

⁴⁸³ Fuchs (2014)

⁴⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guatarri (1983)

⁴⁸⁵ Southwood (2011:25) explains that 'as consumers feelings are foisted upon us whether we want them or not, and accumulate in our consciousness...so that eventually it becomes impossible to differentiate between the real memories and the corporate implants'.

our perception of reality and that of our subconscious, or fantasy worlds – including the simulated worlds of media. The process of extraction used by the ‘Tem’ which seeks to draw out ideas and ‘expressions’ from the artisans’ minds, leaves the mind of the artisan permeable, and the artist slips in and of these worlds. We see on the faces of the artisans, waves of different emotional responses. The machine provokes the artisan to experience their entire life, in a matter of minutes, time and space are collapsed and all memories are transformed into data. There are no longer any divisions or binaries between work and life, subject and object, labour and love, the complete reification of reproduction enables a borderless world, a ‘de-territorialized’⁴⁸⁶ subject. Without borders all simulations and augmented reality enter into an unending process of creating the ‘now’ time.⁴⁸⁷ Where Benjamin uses phantasmagoria to describe the ‘condition’ of the early modern subject, Deleuze and Guatarri’s schizophrenia⁴⁸⁸ or Jean Baudrillard’s simulacra⁴⁸⁹ were used to describe a postmodern state of consciousness under capitalism. *Synophresia nervosa*, then, is a condition that symbolises the current ‘communicative’ or ‘cognitive’ capitalist era. It is the ultimate process to subjectification: the subject is suffocated by subjectivity and it’s all pervasive presence. The atomisation of self and body into the ‘collective’ space of capitalist accumulation is reflected in the production of ‘limb sculptures’. Lox creates a new communication device in her artwork, she no longer needs her hands to make the work, she has her mind. Limbs can be sacrificed, showing the pervasiveness of ‘immaterial’ labour as concept on the consciousness (and in fact on theory).

2.5 Extraction and Body ‘Horrors’

There are elements of ‘body horror’⁴⁹⁰ or body shock and the intersection between corporeality and capital in all of the videos. The employment of devices from ‘body horror’ was an attempt to re-materialise the material, making physical an analogy, which has become entirely abstract. In

⁴⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guatarri (1983)

⁴⁸⁷ See Wim Wenders film *Until the End of the World* (1991) and Hans Richter’s *Dreams that Money Can Buy* (1947), for an exploration of the ‘capture’ of dreams.

⁴⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guatarri (1983)

⁴⁸⁹ Baudrillard (1985) *Simulation and Simulacra*.

⁴⁹⁰ Shelly’s *Frankenstein* (1818) for an early writing of the body as horrific, and later works by Cronenberg.

considering the way that the body must perform under capitalism, I brought to the forefront issues around labour, extraction and ongoing complications around the subject/object break.⁴⁹¹ I wanted to assimilate this body horror or shock with the quotidian in the videos: its functioning, or absence of function, its dissection, its disposal, its inebriation, its senses, the sleeping body, the dreaming or 'unconscious' body, the extended or cyborg body, the communicating body, the virtual body, the body as art, the disfigured body, the labouring body, the clinical body, and the surrogate body.

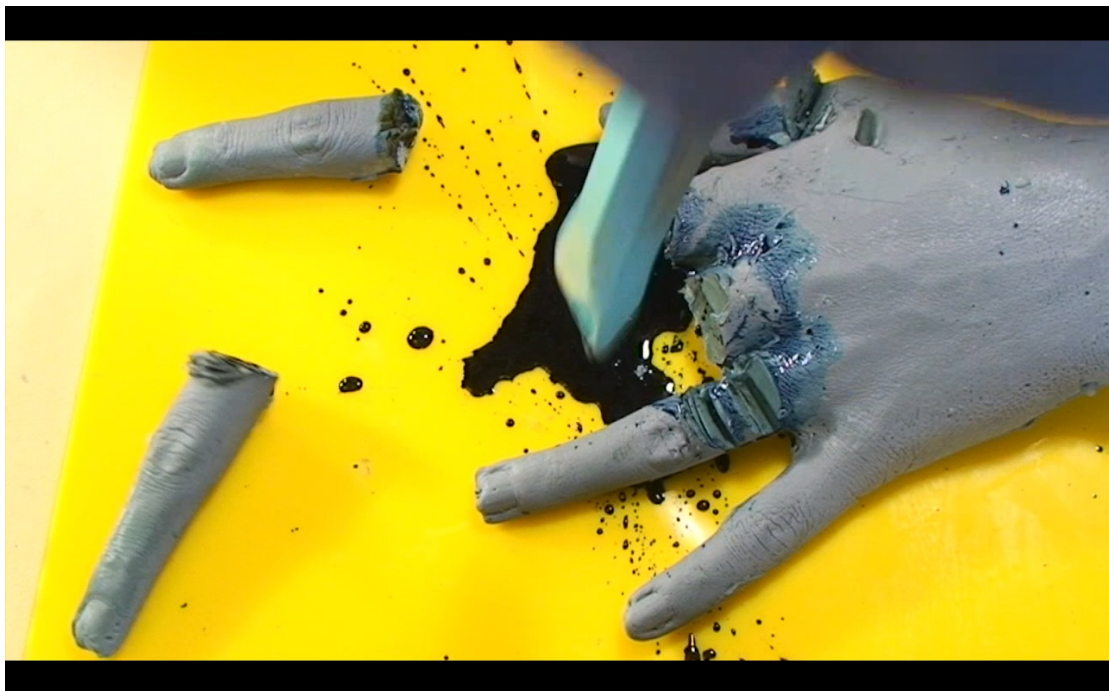


Fig 28. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

I sought to engage a 'body politics' that spoke directly about capitalist accumulation and extraction. This body, was not about specific cultural and personal identities, but about a sense of the collective, the collective body under regimes of extraction. In the cathartic séance of body horror we can project our fears and fantasies of our body as object and (post) subject simultaneously. These multiple transfigurations of 'the body' are only understood in relation to what they are not. We can only witness the 'mutilated' body, in Figure 28, if understood next to a 'whole' body. The 'digital' surrogate in *Private Life* also enables another re-reading of the body

⁴⁹¹ Here I refer to Susan Stewart's (1993) writing on the grotesque body, where she uses Lacan's 'erotogenic' zones that mark the openings of the body as boundary zones that differentiate between subject and object (104-105). Stewart goes on to explain that in cutting the body apart (in art for example) we make the body grotesque.

as a site of the 'natural' or 'normal'. These readings of the body have their origins in the long history of 'the artist's body'⁴⁹² in postmodern art practice, and combine an awareness of 1960-70s feminist practice that sought to radicalise the female body and decouple it from its pre-determined role as 'reproductive',⁴⁹³ to later interpretations of the body as abject,⁴⁹⁴ as commodity,⁴⁹⁵ or as technological.⁴⁹⁶ Within my practice there is an intended return to the abject, after what has seemed like a conscious hiatus from specific 'messy' body politics in contemporary art. This is a response to the dichotomy between, on the one hand, the bio-medicalization of the body, and its control, and the loss of the body through the digital, and on the other, the continued presence, or in fact realities of the corporeal side of eating, reproducing and existing under capital. But again, as I explain, this politics is not about the individual but the collective body, and its abjections.

In *Monsters of the Market* (2011) David McNally asserts that although cultural depictions and creations of horror are often important political and historical reflections. Consequently we must not get caught up in pathologizing horror as 'out there' as a safe vent for social unease and recognise the horrors implicit in capitalism.⁴⁹⁷ McNally also identifies body-panics as important social responses to the impositions of capitalism. The body, I believe, has a renewed potency today through the perceived loss of materiality and abstraction in both the virtual world, and the fragmentation of labour through the global division of labour. The investment in the body horror genres, in forensic thrillers, zombie and vampire films and medical reality TV shows reflects a growing need to control and depict the body through media, biology, medicine and war. Body horror as entertainment also offers a cathartic release from the constraints put on the body and time, and recycles non-reproduction, or limited reproduction into aesthetic form for entertainment. The huge number of body focused reality television shows is

⁴⁹² Here I make reference to the compendium *The Artist's Body* (2000) edited by Tracey Warr and Amelia Jones, that chronicles the artist's body in art from the 1960s onward.

⁴⁹³ Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975), Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document* (1975), Lynda Benglis *Untitled* (1974).

⁴⁹⁴ Jayne Parker *K* (1989) Kiki Smith *Untitled* (1990).

⁴⁹⁵ Orlan *Omnipresence* (1993).

⁴⁹⁶ Helen Chadwick *Self Portrait* (1991).

⁴⁹⁷ McNally (2011)

testament to a cultural fascination with the abject body, or the transformation of points of social deviance into escapism, with the obese, sick, or horrific body. However this accessible deviance further estranges the body from autonomy and as McNally writes:

The very insidiousness of the capitalist grotesque has to do with its invisibility with, in other words, the ways in which monstrosity becomes normalised and naturalised via its colonisation of the essential fabric of everyday life, beginning with the very texture of corporeal experience...What is most striking about capitalist monstrosity...is its elusive everydayness.⁴⁹⁸

David Cronenberg's archetypal 'body horror' films were influential to me when making the trilogy, as they plot a space between body as subject, or as labour, and as object or as abstraction. *Videodrome* (1983) successfully captures the inconsistencies between the virtual and the biological. The videotape as appendage bridges the space between the impact of capitalism's virtual 'ultra violence', and its more corporeal affects on the real body. However the videotape (like the old Nokia mobile phones used in *Keela Mine*) is now in a sense antique, a ruin of representational technologies, much like Benjamin's phantasmagoria. Body panics, then, can reveal the changes in capitalist accumulation, as McNally identifies in both Victorian *Frankenstein* and the colonial zombie myth.⁴⁹⁹ Indeed many of Cronenberg's key 'body horror' films were made during the transformation to global neoliberalism, and technological developments in global communications. They embody the collective fears of powerlessness faced by workers, and the commodification of bodies and minds. While such fears could be seen as recurrent under capitalism, I was interested in asking what fears or concerns we can identify for the contemporary body. The sale of organs to pay debts in *Keela Mine* is one, which is not to suggest that I claim this to be new, but that the culture of indebtedness has forced both individual and states to 'sacrifice' parts in the interest of the 'whole'. In *Synophresia Nervosa* the sacrifice of body parts as 'expression' reflects a need to re-materialise sensory experience in the age of digital pervasiveness, but more

⁴⁹⁸ McNally (2011:2)

⁴⁹⁹ McNally (2011)

importantly continues to question the ongoing logic of value in the cult of the individual artist's mind/body.

'Body panics' are historically situated in the film *Taxidermia* (2006) by György Pálfi. A very masculine disfigured body is shown as metaphor for Hungary's political regimes, the almost unwatchable sex scenes, eating competitions, and human taxidermy all focus on the body as a conduit for power. The body is transformed by history, and at each point it is both an appendage of the regime and a metaphor of its inherent problems. As Steven Shaviro writes of *Taxidermia*:

One usually speaks in such contexts of a 'crisis' of masculinity; but the film presents this 'crisis' as a chronic and recurrent condition. When mediation is bypassed, and all the determinations of power and authority are directly inscribed in the flesh, there is no room for the 'symbolic' dimensions of masculine privilege. All three protagonists... are engaged in starkly material practices of stimulating, regulating and breaking down their bodies.⁵⁰⁰

In *Taxidermia* we quickly recognise that none of the body horror is supernatural; it is all marginally plausible even though dramatically exaggerated. The unique combination of the everyday lives of bodies and the horrific realities they are subject to does not allow you to disassociate from the horror. The freakish nature of the bodies is continually situated in familiar surrounds. In a similar vein John Cunningham writes that:

this real horror spoken of; that eruptive form of flies flicking over dead lips, or the quieter transference of money into flesh and vice versa, the awful, immanent creep of death in the shape of the most mundane survival activities, such as working to eat.⁵⁰¹

Therefore the bodies and actions of the characters in *Taxidermia* become an exaggerated form of the everyday horrors of capital.

The film however almost completely ignores the female body, and its 'horrors'. Barbara Creed identifies the monstrous feminine in horror film as

⁵⁰⁰ Shaviro (2011:101)

⁵⁰¹ From Cunningham (2013) 'the Speculative Horror Academy'.

depictions of horror, which are specifically gendered and female. Using Julia Kristeva's writing on the abject⁵⁰² Creed identifies the monstrous womb (*Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Alien* (1979) and the witch (*Carrie* (1976) as archetypal female monsters.⁵⁰³ The importance of the idea of the monstrous feminine is that it draws on fears about women's bodies, and more specifically her reproductive functions. It was in response to Kristeva's and wider feminist writing on abjection⁵⁰⁴ that the abject was developed through artists practice in the 1980-90s. Artists drew on the breakdown or loss of distinction afforded by abjection, between themselves and others, and the abject by-products of the body, and cultural abjections, which included the maternal body.⁵⁰⁵ These concepts were explored in work that pushed the boundaries between abject/subject, and both celebrated and critiqued the abject characteristics imposed upon the female body, in a parody of this subjection. However, subsequent critiques made of artwork that employs abjection as an empowerment of the 'othered' biological processes of women and the mother, are concerned with the way that often such depictions or indeed celebrations play back into the same cultural fantasies and prejudices that continue to subjugate women to violence and oppression.⁵⁰⁶ While I do see some merit in this critique, as women by no means desire to be reduced to their biological capacity, I also recognise a wider politics that is at stake in making such experiences invisible, by sanitising the experience, or by reproducing the same cultural stereotypes that currently define women and social reproduction in the mass media. In reclaiming the abject, we reclaim, or own the processes that have consistently been disregarded as worthless. In many ways the abject is one sphere which resists being extracted from, just consider the many medical and cosmetic processes that are developed to extract parts of the body that are deemed abject – fat, skin, wrinkles, emotion, tumours.

At the same time the processes of giving birth and early child rearing continue to be medicalised and sterilised, showing that such fears are still

⁵⁰² Kristeva (1984) *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection*.

⁵⁰³ Creed (1993)

⁵⁰⁴ Kristeva (1984), Butler (1993), Irigaray (1994)

⁵⁰⁵ Jones (2007)

⁵⁰⁶ Tyler (2009)

ongoing. This fear or associated shame is coupled with the unrecognised sphere of reproduction in producing the labour force. In *Synophresia Nervosa* when Lox gives birth to eggs she embodies the female performer, the mother, and the monstrous feminine, as she simulates an alien act of birth. She quickly cuts apart and inspects what she produces in a clinical ritual of creation and destruction, much like her arm sculptures seen in Figure 29. As more aspects of our bodily needs and processes become commoditised we lose control over many processes, which are outside of the working day, such as sex (through the proliferation of pornography) illness (through the over-treatment of conditions) and birth (through the proliferation of the C-section). In taking hold of her bodily processes Lox tries to reclaim autonomy over her body, and also her (art)work.

The film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956/1978) responds to this loss of autonomy of the body, and a fear of our identity being extracted. This was reflective of social panics about intrusion during the Cold War, in the 1950's, and again, in 1970s, over the recession and the globalisation of industrial labour. Lars Bang Larsen writes of the film that:

The body-snatched don't just mindlessly roam the cities in search of flesh and brains (as we would see in the walking dead), but have occupied the networks of communication and start a planetary operation to circulate bodies, as if proponents of the great transformation from industrial to immaterial labour.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁷ Larsen (2009:84)



Fig 29. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

This blurring between the immaterial and the corporeal, and between the 'real' and the fantastical performs a specific function in body horror film. In all of Cronenberg's 'body horror' films he attempts to synthesize a prop or being that is at once living and dead, mechanical and organic, and emancipatory and oppressive. This attempt to transcend the limits of the flesh, through the flesh offers a unique way of reading capitalism. The 'living objects' in *Naked Lunch* (1992) embody the labour hidden in the commodity. The reassertion of the real/fake body throughout the video trilogy undermines the way in which contemporary subjects are denied autonomy over their body, and its powers. It also questions the assumption that the power of the body lies in its subjecthood. Labour power as commodity does not directly require a subjectivity, yet the body cannot be raised without a subject. Consequently if the 'subject' is the new terrain on which capital extracts value then how can we retreat back into the body, in a hope to avoid such a fate?

Melanie Gilligan's film serial *Popular Unrest* (2010) addresses the body, and in a pastiche of body horror reconfigures the 'future' body in relation to abstraction. The body and human labour becomes an unwanted by-product, which is recoded as data. The 'spirit', a corporate system which controls both the social and economic functions of society, regulates bodies by abstracting

them to readable data and killing those that fall outside of the private 'safe zones'. Gilligan's films offer a unique combination of narrative, analysis and Science Fiction, which play out near future scenarios as political and philosophical questions. The treatment of the body in *Popular Unrest* is interchangeable with the subject or consciousness, and by equating them she illuminates how both are read, understood and quantified in bio-capitalism. The 'stabbing' punctuate the smooth clinical surface of the working body in her fictional world, ensuring that no matter how regulated our bodies and minds are there is always a 'by-product'. The stabbings represent either the unleashed monster subconscious of the 'spirit' (the spirit uploads all the minds of humanity-making it sick with subjectivity), or the human sacrifices that capital makes in order to accumulate. As the characters are transformed into a total biomechanical apparatus of abstract-value, they become accomplices to the spirit. The idea of the algorithmic fragmentation of the body is also explored by Ed Atkins in the video *Us Talk Dead Love* (2012). Atkins employs the dismembered body or cadaver to reflect on corporeality through digital means. In a reverse of Gilligan's transformation of the real body into data, Atkins re-assembles the dead body as digital data, inserting subjectivity into the digital body as it breathes and feels. Atkins makes the cadaver a surrogate for a performer, or for himself as the artist's body, or the art object. In this inter-changeability we understand the commodity relation, which he fiercely tries to undo through subjectivity, love and feelings. In *Private Life* when the manager exclaims "I can't remember what's been taken...so as what we need to replace", I allude to the virtual self having fused with the mass of already existing subjectivity, which then equates all things living and dead with each other.



Fig 30. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

2.6 Creative Extraction and the General Intellect

If we consider the extension of the wage relation and the commodification of cultural and personal spheres, we must ask whether the global labour arbitrage has changed the nature of labour in the global North? Ironically not into the mass intellectual or immaterial practices described Vercellone,⁵⁰⁸ Hardt and Negri,⁵⁰⁹ and Virno.⁵¹⁰ But through the increase in unskilled minimum wage 'service' jobs, which now make up the biggest proportion of current labour in the United Kingdom. If workers in the global North are no longer on salary wages and most are in the lower wage bracket, I was led to consider how the consumptive practices of the working class, and middle classes could be sustained. We know from Lazzarato's observations that much of this consumption relies on debt,⁵¹¹ which makes a brief appearance in *Synophresia Nervosa*, but I wanted to go past debt to consider what would happen when wages were brought to their absolute minimum, and schemes of working for free or working welfare had been exhausted, how then will

⁵⁰⁸ Vercellone (2006)

⁵⁰⁹ Hardt and Negri (2005)

⁵¹⁰ Virno (2004)

⁵¹¹ Lazzarato (2011)

capitalism continue to accumulate? Can value be extracted while people sleep? Or continuously? Bearing this in mind I want to use this global context to address the commodification of knowledge and intellectual labour as a shifting zone under the under extractive logic of capitalism.⁵¹²

The commodification of knowledge or in fact intelligentsia, forms part of what Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge identify as a new separation of thinkers from their means of production as ‘the consciousness industry attempts to incorporate sections of the intelligentsia in serving its own demands; it trains specialists for dealing with the fantasy production and experience of the masses’,⁵¹³ and therefore:

the consciousness industry simultaneously – although motivated by an independent profit interest – makes the human brain the object of its valorisation...the productive intelligentsia is alienated from its existing mode of production...and subsumed under abstract, industrialised work processes...⁵¹⁴

This alienation of the knowledge worker puts her in a closer relationship with the proletariat and marks out an ironic double split from head and hand to head and machine, where the apparatus created by the thinker is instrumental in exploiting herself. Such a double bind can be read similarly in the production and consumption of art as object and institution. Art as an institution emerges out of the bourgeois consciousness; it then strangulates or subsumes the artist and art object in the apparatus of class and taste. Negt and Kluge attest to this contradictory relationship when they explain that proletarian resistance, if not enacted in the public sphere, ironically ‘provides the raw material for new processes of appropriation by capital’⁵¹⁵; the artisan’s ‘feelings, perceptions and illusions’⁵¹⁶ in *Synophresia Nervosa* (see Figure 30) thus form the raw material for the further exploitation and extraction of their own time and labour in a process which comfortably resembles home.

⁵¹² de Angelis(2009) has written on the role of intellectual copyright with regard to this. However for a more critical look at the place of Marx’s general intellect see Michael Heinrich (2013) for the problems within the famous ‘fragment on machines’.

⁵¹³ Negt and Kluge (1993:175)

⁵¹⁴ Negt and Kluge (1993:183)

⁵¹⁵ Negt and Kluge (1993:186)

⁵¹⁶ Ibid (176)

The 'ideas lab' in *Synophresia Nervosa* is a conglomeration of a university, an enterprise, and a clinic. This fictional space set in the real space of a newly renamed university 'learning centre', complete with 'learning pods', refers to the incorporation of the network space of business and think tanks into the university. The spaces of discourse, discussion and informality often employed by the think tank or start-up were previously the very fabric of universities and academia. Conversely, it is now sold back, repackaged, to the university as part of the university as business model. The ideas lab becomes a strategy to suck up people's dreams, ideas and memories, seeking to extract 'immaterial' value from the artisans. Through this fictional phenomenon I sought to question and engage ideas around Marx's concept of the general intellect or 'social brain'. And in visually conceptualising a 'social brain'⁵¹⁷ or intellectual 'hive' I reflect on how this social brain 'feeds' the needs of capital. In uniting artisans through the process of extraction, a unique consciousness is created, which in turn does create a space for a revolutionary consciousness. However I wanted to look at the 'general intellect' as an appendage to capital, and therefore consider what form such an appendage would take and how it would extract value? The bio-mechanic apparatus in the videos, seen in Figure 31, used for the 'brain drain' functions to both allegorise the 'social brain' and to satirise 'immaterial' production, transforming it into an abject bodily routine. The scenes of brain drain share more with Frankenstein's lab than the smooth ergonomic surfaces of digital interface and tablets that slide between pocket and hand in everyday life. Yet within the question of creative extraction we are faced with two questions: the question of the construction of the individual idea, and the question around its subsumption. In order to address these two questions successfully I needed to analyse both simultaneously. Thus the artists 'ideas' could be read as only being able to exist within the capitalist machine of extraction, which creates them as it extracts – creation through negation.

⁵¹⁷ Benjamin quoted in Markus (2001:10).



Fig 31. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

Marx's 'fragment on machines,'⁵¹⁸ which is influential to the multiple readings of post-Fordist capitalism by Post-Operaismo,⁵¹⁹ describes a society where the 'social brain'⁵²⁰ becomes the source of value and this value is embedded in the fixed capital of machines and within 'mass intellectuality'⁵²¹ itself. The general intellect is put to work constructing the mechanic and communicative linkages under advanced capitalism, and, accordingly, Marx notes that this system of integrated communication and collective thinking contains revolutionary potentiality.⁵²² Real life examples of the general intellect as appendage for capital could be seen as the 'brains' of elite schools put to work in finance and marketing, the collected mass of computer programmers and code writers from Silicon Valley to Mumbai, and the sheer mass of human material consciousness amassed on the Internet. However ironically scientific development is becoming compromised, not aided by capital,⁵²³ government spending on science in many global North countries has fallen, and the role of the corporation to pick up the slack has not eventuated in all

⁵¹⁸ Marx (1993)

⁵¹⁹ Negri (1988), Vercellone (2006), Virno (2007) all redevelop Marx's 'Fragment' in different ways.

⁵²⁰ Ibid

⁵²¹ See Virno (2004) however these machines are not clever in terms of the environment or humanity, they only exist for profit.

⁵²² Marx (1992)

⁵²³ See Smith (2004) where Smith looks at the relationship between technological development and capitalism.

areas, but only in those where a direct profit can be made.⁵²⁴ This has meant that the space for scientific experiment is diminishing, and as such what we possibly face is a slow process of ‘dumbing down’ in scientific development.

Although Tony Smith refutes this predisposition to the ‘fragment’⁵²⁵ by Post-Operaist theorists and underlines that this passage shows the evolution in Marx’s thought not its culmination.⁵²⁶ We can, however, use Marx’s analogy of the social brain in reflection on the way that knowledge and ideas are commodified, the subject is formed under capital and consider the ways the ‘general intellect’ has become an appendage or as Read considers ‘fixed capital’ for capital. Paolo Virno has developed a specific approach to the general intellect explaining that:

all the more generic attitudes of the mind gain primary status as productive resources; these are the faculty of language, the disposition to learn, the power of abstraction, and relation and the tendency of self-reflexivity. General intellect needs to be understood literally as intellect in general: the faculty and power to think, rather than works produced by thought.⁵²⁷

These ideas are further developed by his work *A Grammar of the Multitude*, where Virno identifies the ‘virtuoso’ (and thus political) and communicative aspect of post-Fordist production. Where the culture industry (which has become a blueprint for other types of industry) relies on the ‘informality of communicative behaviour’ to ‘enliven’ production. This virtuosic performance of work is now ‘a typical trait of the *entire* realm of social production’.⁵²⁸

Alternatively Vercellone explains that post-Fordist techniques, which utilise the ‘intellect in general’, actually present a retroactive process back to formal subsumption,⁵²⁹ and out of the factory.⁵³⁰ This is important when considering artistic production, as where real subsumption has control over all elements

⁵²⁴ See ‘Crossroads of Invention’ in *Scientific American* a paper written by the editors October (2013), where the global state of scientific research is described, and most importantly the case of Siri for Apple is explained, a project which grew out of government military spending, which apple then bought at its fully developed stage, paying little in terms of research and development, but profiting from the research.

⁵²⁵ See Henninger (2007) and Camfield (2006) for a critique of.

⁵²⁶ Smith (2013)

⁵²⁷ Virno (2007)

⁵²⁸ Virno (2004:24)

⁵²⁹ I elaborate on Marx’s theories of subsumption in the next Chapter.

⁵³⁰ Vercellone (2006)

of labour, under formal subsumption, like the mercantile economy, Vercellone explains, capital actually appropriates – from the workers ‘traditional knowledge’.⁵³¹ For example, the move from production to service represents a shift from the workers physical body as ‘cog’ in the machine, as both Virno and Berardi explain,⁵³² to the use of her social, communicative capacities as resource in the service industry. Vercellone explains that ‘if technical progress in its capitalist form allows the expropriation of the traditional knowledge of the worker, the labour process remains irreducibly conflictual’.⁵³³ So let us consider this concept in relation to art and artistic production. Are artists’ ‘traditional knowledges’ and ‘techniques’ being appropriated by capitalism? If so, then, according to Vercellone, the proliferating site of the art world – its ‘factory’, its labour, both in and out of the studio, should be a site of continual conflict. This conflict could be understood by the process of art-as-negation, but it can equally be read in the penetration of commodification into the artistic technique. However, I purport that it is the ‘uselessness’ of art that saves it from the complete technical appropriation or real subsumption by capital into the apparatus of extraction. This does not however mean that art, especially understood as a ‘social brain’, or general technique, is preserved from commodification and inclusion into total social capital. Advertising, product design, commercial film, commercial art, tourist art, cultural tourism, education, policy, therapy, commercial music, and literature are just some of the areas where artists’ ‘general’ or individual intellect has been transformed into commodity as object or service. The stylised and designed virtual world we occupy has been ‘created’ often by teams of art or design graduates and does represent the very real creative formal subsumption of artistic technique.

In *Synophresia Nervosa* I respond and reflect on the idea of the general intellect and the way and which a general or collective knowledge could be read and then harvested for accumulative purposes. This already sets up an interesting paradox, given on the one hand that we are thinking about a

⁵³¹ Vercellone (2006)

⁵³² Virno (2007), Berardi (2009)

⁵³³ Vercellone (2006:17)

collective or mass body of ideas, or constant capital (which in itself has revolutionary potentiality), but on the other hand, in the video we are looking at individual subjects, their 'distinct' dreams and the ways in which capital wants to extract their individuality. This led me to think about art and ideas in a different way. In art and academia 'originality' is still prioritised, the individual subject, who is the product of what Sohn-Rethel identified as the principle of exchange abstraction, is recognised for their work – which has value in its 'one off-ness'.⁵³⁴ This is diametrically opposed to the labour that the mass of people perform. So what I was trying to understand was how the logic of mass extraction under capitalism reconciles itself with the individual's ideas.⁵³⁵ Through the ideas lab artisans were 'feeding' their ideas into a 'bank' (a bank full of their hopes and dreams, thoughts and fears). This economic metaphor was intentional as it enabled me to put together two contradictory elements: the immaterial world of ideas and exchange abstraction, and the very material or physical world of accumulation – in wage labour. Ideas are not instantly equivalent with value, or money, it is only in their application that they can extract value, or hold value. The exchange-abstraction and the equivalence in money, progressively turns our subjectivity and ideas into data to be mined and controlled. But through this process, which is analogous to the contradiction between individual and abstract labour power we can locate the following quandary: how singular ideas merge as a conglomerated mass, transformed into an accumulative apparatus? Virno's 'multitude of singularities'⁵³⁶ points to the antinomy within ideas of the singular in relation to the multiple, and especially how peculiar these ideas are when faced with the production of individual works of art.

⁵³⁴ Sohn-Rethel (1978)

⁵³⁵ Of course such issues have been explored historically, for example Benjamin 'The Author as Producer' (1999).

⁵³⁶ Virno interviewed by Penzin (2010:84).



Fig 32. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2013)

This paradox must be taken into account in the example of the ‘idea lab’ in *Synophresia Nervosa*. As the ‘Tem’ (who act ‘as one’) must develop techniques of cultivation and subsequent extraction from ‘the many’. Yet when ideas like labour are transformed into a mass they lose their distinctness, and therefore it is this struggle for ‘originality’ that looms over the act of creative extraction. In ‘capturing’ ideas from the artisans these ideas could merely turn to dust in the machine, or more realistically they are unusable, as an idea on its own cannot create value – it is the labour that puts them into action.⁵³⁷ However, we know that capital is hungry for invention, and is willing to fund research into new profitable extractive techniques. This leads us to consider what may happen if the speed with which capital subsumes life accelerates to the speed of consciousness itself, and all memories become the same – as we see in the condition *synophresia nervosa* (Figure 32). If capital does in fact need a sphere outside of itself to extract from this would create a problem for capital, as no idea or action would exist outside of the exchange relationship, so decisions would be made as pre-cognates, but such decisions would only be made with the impetus of profit. However, I cannot help but fear this permeation of

⁵³⁷ Caffentzis (2013)

exchange value into consciousness has already taken place. In a recent University meeting we were faced with how to 'train' our students to become more productive citizens for capital, in what is termed 'employability'. This is not any specific career drive, but what could be described as a generic drive imported (via the state) into the university to synthesise the consciousness of the students with the labour market.

Throughout this Chapter I have focused on the relationship between art, value, and what I have described as creative extraction. I wanted to open up a number of debates around the role of art today, and how this 'condition' has both influenced the wider sphere of work, and has become in many ways emblematic of post-Fordist labour, in both technique and concept. Art's divorce from life, through its very 'exceptionalism'⁵³⁸ in many ways delivers it back into a bourgeois elitist sphere, and un-does all the work that the avant-garde did to link it to a specific critique of capitalism. However in saying this, I do not want to over-emphasise the critical and political role that art currently plays under the totality of global capitalism. Art does still function as a high end commodity, the discourses surrounding art still function to allow the 'liberal' aspects of democratic capitalism to move freely within spheres, like the biennale, or gallery, which are very much separate from most peoples lives. The role of the artist to critique the system they are in is also currently called into question by the very fact that many working class students will not be able to afford to attend art school, and more importantly will not be able to sustain themselves as artists outside of art school. So this chapter served to both critique the development of extractive techniques by capital, and the 'pre-formed' or state formed logic of the arts, which is increasingly speaking to, and of a middle class sensibility.

⁵³⁸ See Beech (2015) where art's 'exceptionalism' is underscored as an ongoing triumph of art over capital.

CHAPTER THREE



Fig 33. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

The Endless Working Day: Digital Extraction and Surrogate Subjects in *Private Life*

Introduction

Private Life (2014) begins and ends in the contemporary office environment, the current 'working day'. It does however, make a journey around differing spaces of labour and accumulation that exist globally and are separated not only spatially but temporally (Figure 33). The manager moves between immaterial and material labour, facilitated by the algorithm and the digital interface, which has been perceived of as primarily 'immaterial'.⁵³⁹ In *Private Life* this split or separation between immaterial and material labour is quickly eroded because one solicits a response from the other. In order for the

⁵³⁹ Of course Huws (2001), Fuchs (2014), Wilkie (2011), and Ross (2009) have argued that the digital is not, in terms of labour, immaterial. And more specifically in terms of a re-materialisation theory like Parisi (2013) – in its ontological mode – the digital is in fact a material, which is in contradiction of theorists such as Castells (2006) who earlier on described a new burgeoning 'network society' or 'weightless economy'.

manager to enter the virtual world he must do so by engaging his corporeal body through the use of a physical apparatus, and in order for him to manage the material world of his workers he must 'engage' the immaterial world of his subject.⁵⁴⁰ *Private Life* exists at the painful limits of the virtual experience, a mix of technological Science Fiction and an intimate realism, it shifts from the space of the 'global' to the intimate. It posits the working body of today as abstracted into data, and partly composed of simulations.⁵⁴¹ The virtual world of 'Persohip', taken in part from William Gibson's matrix in *Neuromancer* (1984), provides a heady mirror to the corporately owned world we occupy. This digital 'trick' performed on us hourly every time we search on Google, persuades us that the working day has ended and our 'private' lives have begun. Capital perverts our private lives for the procurement of free labour time and the commodification of reproduction, and in *Private Life* the perversion is illuminated by the very literal intrusion of work into the bathroom. Consequently, in considering our 'private lives', I am referring to both labour and the means of production (both in and outside of the working day), and asking how the pervasiveness of the 'private' in terms of property⁵⁴² functions from the bottom up and the top down in the age of digital labour. As we near the end of web 2.0 and the failed 'digital revolution',⁵⁴³ where the machinic appropriation of our subjectivity has succeeded in place of a greater conception of labour and worker's struggles in the digital sphere, an understanding of the mechanisms of extraction and exploitation within the digital sphere is crucial.⁵⁴⁴

Private Life is the most 'contemporary' video, which deals with current struggles around the 'working day' and the space of the virtual in our working and personal lives. It is located in the banality of time, of temporal extraction, and unlike the previous videos which utilise the notion of place, or location as set, *Private Life* is set in a truly 'global' or generic future/past. *Private Life*

⁵⁴⁰ See Lazzarato (2014) for a discussion on subjectivity where he uses Guattari and Deleuze's (1983) concept of Machines and Foucault's 'biopolitics' (2008) and Hardt's concept of (1999) 'Affective labour'.

⁵⁴¹ Baudrillard (1985)

⁵⁴² Here I refer to Sohn-Rethel's (1978) writing on how the exchange abstraction and private property under capitalism affect our consciousness.

⁵⁴³ This refers in part to the 'liberating' aspect of the web through ideas such as Castells (2006) network society, but more recently to what was described as the Arab Spring's 'twitter revolution'.

⁵⁴⁴ See Rossiter and Zehle (2015) who identify the algorithm as a new device of extraction.

employs different modalities or temporalities of class composition, control, and organization into one work. And because I have employed virtual time/space in the video, I can simulate what I described in Chapter One as the time-travelling function of capital.

In this chapter I ask how has the contemporary working day become a site for the continued pressure of absolute surplus value and how is time measured or controlled through the breakdown of divisions between work and life, through the use of digital technology and its subjectification? How then do we understand Marx's concept of relative surplus value, in an economy supported by the extensive use of Information Communication Technologies? Are we looking at the expansion of the 'social factory'⁵⁴⁵ or does the use of ICTs simply reflect productive trends and consumer habits? In this chapter I begin by looking at management and its conceptualisation as an instrument for capitalist exploitation, but also consider new contradictory notions of the manager-worker, epitomized by the entrepreneur and concepts of self-management. I look at the specific relationships between management in *Private Life* and management and capitalism. The subjective elements of management are identified as the embodiment of systems of extraction, but such an embodiment comes at a cost to capital and this 'fall out' is recollected through the virus in *Private Life*. The second section develops on from the discussion I began around time in Chapter One, and looks specifically at Marx's concept of the working day. I consider the working day as a construct in the video, and examine its expansion and compression, which transforms conceptions of when work begins and ends. Here, as I explained earlier, I deal explicitly with absolute surplus value, but also put the concept of time itself under consideration. In the final section I explore the role of technology in shaping our contemporary work and life experience. I then develop these ideas to explain that Information and Communications Technologies have become the perfect subjective machine for capital. What we have come to see in the pervasive use of ICTs is Marx's exposition of relative surplus extraction, which, as I began to explore in Chapter Two,

⁵⁴⁵ See Tronti (1962) *The Factory and Society*.

further blurs the lines between work and life and production and consumption. *Private Life* employs a range of post-production techniques that situate the video in different temporalities and spaces reminiscent of a Science Fictional space. This functions to express the way that digital and virtual technology has altered not only our sense perception, but, our understanding of both personal and working relationships.

Private Life and the trilogy actively engage with Marx's theories and questions around formal and real subsumption.⁵⁴⁶ In seeking to address the points at which capitalism extracts value from human labour and resources or commons the idea of subsumption is of primary importance. I am not making a case for the complete and final transformation to real subsumption⁵⁴⁷ or a case for a linear progression from formal to real.⁵⁴⁸ I am however interested in considering how ideas of subsumption function today, and how positing them as fluid categories we can illuminate how they function to assist extraction in a globally disparate yet economically homogenous world.⁵⁴⁹ In order to do so, it is important to adopt Marx's proposition that there is a direct relationship between formal subsumption and absolute surplus value and between real subsumption and relative surplus value. Patrick Murray explains that formal subsumption assumes that labour takes the specific social form of 'free' wage labour, meaning that formal subsumption is essentially a social relationship, but this is a relationship of domination.⁵⁵⁰ What then, is interesting to consider, is to go back and ask: how was this social relationship created? We know this involved decades of bloodshed and prosecution by way of the violence of primitive accumulation. But what are the on-going processes, which contribute to the continued production of this social relationship? What is unique to formal subsumption is that it does not change the material production process, but changes the social form (the commodity form, and the relationship of working 'freely' for a wage). Real subsumption, then, is the development of the material or technical

⁵⁴⁶ Marx (1976:1019) see appendix, for a full description of both formal and real subsumption.

⁵⁴⁷ Negri (1992)

⁵⁴⁸ Could be understood in 'stagist' theories of development.

⁵⁴⁹ See for example a recent report on global forms of slavery:

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/17/modern-slavery-35-million-people-walk-free-foundation-report?CMP=fb_gu

⁵⁵⁰ Murray (2004)

instruments of production, and the facilitator of the wider 'social technique'. In real subsumption capitalists have full control over the means of production, it is made and operated with the optimum aim of extracting more surplus. The means of production in *Private Life* – that of management itself: immaterial, social in nature – are in fact controlled by the technical apparatus of Persochip. This enables me to open up a dialogue around how digital and virtual technologies aid the development to the real subsumption of our subjectivity, and to consider affective components of labour. The real subsumption of the general intellect or of the subject is crucial to the research, as while the production process of making a material commodity can be quantified, the intangible quality of academic labour, or even thought which does not 'switch off' outside of the working day, is more problematic.⁵⁵¹ This leads me to deduce that, as Fortunati has explained, personal ICTs are in fact instruments aimed at expanding relative surplus extraction and the real subsumption of all-life.⁵⁵² For example, in a recent advertisement for a Windows tablet, we are convinced that we only require 'this' tablet, as its form and function can effortlessly switch from our personal life to our professional life. We witness shots of a user sliding through interiors with his girlfriend/wife then moving into the same type of scene in work mode. This perfectly reflects the growing acceptance that not only will work and personal life blur, but that the actions, motions and aesthetics of a touch screen or digital interface subsume all activity and simulate the material aspects of labour.⁵⁵³ These layers of the screen are employed as a device in *Private Life*. Not only are screens layered in scenes, but the irony of the manager entering his virtual world to merely access another world of the touch screen shows the endless preoccupation with the screen as interface or portal to 'nowhere'. The subsumption of all-life by capital or indeed technology is itself a contradiction, as Endnotes point out;⁵⁵⁴ as the universal subsumes the particular there must be something left in order for the two categories to exist.

⁵⁵¹ de Angelis and Harvie (2009)

⁵⁵² Fortunati (2007)

⁵⁵³ See Manovich's (2013) 'Software In Command' where he elucidates a theory of software as material – believing that the pervasiveness of software needs to be addressed in cultural theory.

⁵⁵⁴ See Endnotes #2 'A History of Subsumption'.

And it is what capitalism ‘leaves behind’ that I have developed as the substance of The trilogy.

3.1 Mining the Subjective/Managing the Subjective: Management as Apparatus in Extraction

In creating an unstable chimera of organisational systems in *Private Life*,⁵⁵⁵ I initially wanted to call for the similarities between old and new management under capital, exposing the old/new ‘spirits’ of capitalism. But through the research it was hard to ignore the very real effects of capitalism reconfiguring or simply ‘rebranding’ the logics of surplus extraction.⁵⁵⁶ Extraction, and cognitive and temporal ‘capture’ structure *Private Life* theoretically and aesthetically, and the ‘manager’ functions as an appendage for this extraction. However, we see that the manager is also submitted to the same working day as those he manages. Management systems like logistics and algorithms, in themselves, cannot extract value from the worker, but they function as an appendage in the management of labour-power-as-commodity. Throughout *Private Life* the manager continually butts up against the limits of rational management or bureaucracy, which currently employ the codified use of the emotional or what Lazzarato has identified as subjection.⁵⁵⁷ These ‘rational’ systems are substituted by the ‘personal’ style of new management, and the combination of both ‘self management’ and its administrative tool – virtual and digital technology.

The character of ‘the Manager’ was developed from the performance *Forever Living Everywhere Induction* (2012). This generic ‘manager’ became a stand in for the managerial apparatus of capital, but also the wider permeation of the practices of scientific management and the insidious forms of ‘subjective’ management inside and outside of the working day. In the Trilogy, the manager, seen in Figure 34, functions between the capitalist or ‘Tem’

⁵⁵⁵ See Lefort (1986) for an analysis of bureaucracy and modern society in capitalism, communism and fascism.

⁵⁵⁶ See Loring and Marrazi (1980) for a reflection of the political transformations at the beginning of neoliberalism, which almost feel like it could have been written for today.

⁵⁵⁷ Lazzarato (2013)

(state/corporation) and the workers, she/he functions as an intermediary or supervisor. The manager is obviously captivated by the role she/he has to play in *Forever Living* and what little we hear and see of the manager in *Synophresia Nervosa* (Figure 35) and *Keela Mine* they take on board the caricature of an officious bureaucrat.



Fig 34. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

However when it came to representing the character of the manager from their perspective I chose not to depict the manager as officious and sycophantic, instead highlighting the lack of efficacy that each manager or supervisor has. Such a portrayal is not intended as sympathetic to 'management' per se, or the hierarchies which currently structure the wage under capitalism, but it was important to be able to speak about the way that management, is managed itself, and the way that most jobs now involve some element of 'management' even if it is in terms of 'self management'. Through the depiction of the 'duties' the character of the manager in the videos has to perform, we understand how control is enacted through a range of emotions, and see clearly the moments when he fails to 'manage' at all.

Management is the subjective apparatus of capitalism and therefore has a key role in supervising extraction, even if the manager does not produce surplus value directly, or given many contemporary working conditions, own or have access to the surplus themselves. If we consider current working conditions in the global North, management is a consistent component which very much informs the working experience,⁵⁵⁸ if only because it is the first human point which the worker butts up against in their working day. Management's historic relationship with bureaucracy and its instrumentality in supervising extraction is identified by Max Weber through the quantification of labour power as resource:

Business management throughout rests on the increasing precision, steadiness and above all speed of operations...The optimum of such reaction time is normally attained only by a strictly bureaucratic organisation.⁵⁵⁹

Here Weber situates the advent of bureaucratic forms of management within modern capitalism and more specifically Fordism, and makes the correlation between capitalist management and temporality. Adorno subsequently examines Weber's classification of bureaucratic structures to understand the role of administration.⁵⁶⁰ He explains that the permeation of administrative rationality into cultural spheres demonstrated 'the extension of conditions of exchange throughout the entirety of life.'⁵⁶¹ This objectivity and 'thinking in equivalents' under the Fordist production system, was seen to permeate into life itself,⁵⁶² converting all of life under abstraction.⁵⁶³ But it was in fact this perceived mechanical quality of modern systems of management and bureaucracy that provided a template for change in the 'new firm' in post-Fordism. Boltanski and Chiapello analyse changes in management discourse, which signal one of the 'shifts' in 'the new spirit of capitalism' from the mode of rationalisation and the machine during the 1960s through to the 90s model of the network.⁵⁶⁴ Their ideas are useful in identifying how this

⁵⁵⁸ de Angelis and Harvie (2009) Ross (2009)

⁵⁵⁹ Weber (1978:974)

⁵⁶⁰ Adorno (1991)

⁵⁶¹ Adorno (1991:110)

⁵⁶² Consider Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

⁵⁶³ Adorno (1991)

⁵⁶⁴ Boltanski and Chiapello (2005)

transformation re-moulds the same aims of profit and surplus extraction into new discursive frames. Although Boltanski and Chiapello's claims over how 'new' these management techniques really are have been called into question.⁵⁶⁵ The important issue therefore is not to deny the change in form in contemporary management. But the fact that management's objectives remain the same: profit, extension of the working day, increased efficiency, and competition. New forms of management, then, realise the flexibility of capital, and its power to adapt and change in its drive for profit and accumulation. Marina Vishmidt writes that management in its 'double character of being both totalising and infinitely adjustable makes it the perfect emblem of the capital relation.'⁵⁶⁶ However 'at the same time, its role as the mediator of processes of valorisation, brings it into ideological and actual proximity with religion and therapy.'⁵⁶⁷ In these terms management as subject in *Private Life* is both specific in its 'tasks' and addresses the wider apparatus of capital in its objectives.

The implementation of measurement and techniques of exploitation are still at the heart of contemporary management.⁵⁶⁸ Techniques of management are enacted directly by corporations,⁵⁶⁹ or more indirectly by the state, for example zero-hours contracts and the work-for-dole schemes. Current job 'scarcity' also contributes to the self-management of people to work in poorly paid and unskilled jobs. However as the top down model of management has been in some cases replaced by the network, we now see the proliferation of low level management or supervisory roles,⁵⁷⁰ especially in the service industry. These poorly paid supervisory roles and a range of de-skilled semi-professional jobs could be seen to reflect a 'proletarianization of the professional.'⁵⁷¹ This 'levelling' of the playing field has actually increased the highly 'measured' practices of Fordist production (where labour is fragmented

⁵⁶⁵ Budgen (2000), Lazzarato (2011)

⁵⁶⁶ Vishmidt (2012)

⁵⁶⁷ Vishmidt (2012)

⁵⁶⁸ See Stone (2013) <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-10-15/careers-at-amazon-why-its-so-hard-to-climb-jeff-bezoss-corporate-ladder#p1>

⁵⁶⁹ See Cadwalladr (2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/dec/01/week-amazon-insider-feature-treatment-employees-work>

⁵⁷⁰ See Christian Fuchs (2014) for a discussion on labour in Silicon Valley and Andrew Ross (2009) for a discussion on precarious labour in the 'new' working conditions.

⁵⁷¹ Oppenheimer (1972)

into packets of value), transforming and quantifying immaterial labour. Stefano Harney writes that 'management is the science of knowing not only labour's cost but also its value.'⁵⁷² Within the context of 'immaterial' practices de Angelis and Harvie explain that:

An army of economists, statisticians, Management-scientists and consultants, information-specialists, accountants, bureaucrats...is engaged in a struggle to commensurate heterogeneous concrete human activities on the basis of equal quantities of human labour in the abstract, that link it to work and value.⁵⁷³

This subjectivization of management, or conversely the way that subjectivity and indeed our personal lives are now managed (the management of subjectivity),⁵⁷⁴ directly informs *Private Life*. This can, also be understood in relationship to self-management and Lazzarato's arguments that follow on from Foucault.⁵⁷⁵ We are also talking about a different type of labour in *Private Life* from those in the previous videos. This labour is entirely about the management of people, people as data, and consequently addresses the notion that subjectivity is quantifiable and thus controllable. This control of the subject is performed in *Private Life* by the management of both the main characters work life and personal life. We witness professional and personal systems of management side by side: the directive commands of the superior at work, next to the emotional 'contract' he has with his wife. The reification of self and relationships means that the 'pre-formed' subject has augmented his world so that all components become a mirror of the drive for profit, or to maximize his working capacities. This however comes as a shock for the manager in *Private Life*, as the circuit between what he thinks he knows and the way in which he has projected his reality overlap, causing a sensation of loss of control.

⁵⁷² Harney (2005:585)

⁵⁷³ de Angelis and Harvie (2009:5)

⁵⁷⁴ The proliferation of 'human resources' departments are testament to this management of the subject.

⁵⁷⁵ Lazzarato (2011), Foucault (2008)



Fig 35. Video Still *Synophresia Nervosa* (2014)

The virtual system 'Persochip' has become a tool for both work and pleasure and accordingly this is harnessed as a device to control the subject both inside and outside of the working day. As the manager says "but this is my personal mode, I was meant to finish hours ago". He is incredulous at the appearance of his supervisor into his private virtual space, just as we have heard of people complain when their boss or colleagues write on their Facebook page. This type of 'invasion of privacy' is a new strategy for management. The manager however is put quickly on the back foot, as he is identified as having gone against protocol and thus exists outside the 'normal' perimeter of professional behaviour. Guilt is used as a tool for management here, as a way to transcend normal procedures in order to move into the crevices of the anomaly. This will then evolve and solidify as standard procedure. As Lazzarato explains we are subject to the dual process of subjection and machinic enslavement:

Take the example of a corporation: salaried employees are enslaved to the automatization of procedures...But when a breakdown, an incident, or a malfunction occurs, the subject must be mobilized in order to 'recover'.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁶ Lazzarato (2014:38)

This example punctuates the events of *Private Life*, and as such we see how 'emotion' is mobilised by both agent and manager to smooth over any system malfunctions. Considering the way desire, guilt, compassion, diligence and self-improvement are all used to control and motivate the worker.⁵⁷⁷ It becomes clear that the compulsion of the market, outlined by Marx as the driving force of control, has proliferated into our subjectivity extracting emotional capacity as a device for management. This demonstrates that abstraction taken into the sphere of subjectivity, where emotions and responses are classified and quantified by the principal of the exchange abstraction, creates both symbolic contestation and the re-examination of emotion-as-quantity both in and against capital.

Ivor Southwood writes in *Non-Stop Inertia* of the way that emotional labour⁵⁷⁸ has proliferated in the modern workplace:

So regardless of whether the work itself is directly concerned with affect, it contains elements of emotion management and virtuosity, both in covering over true anxieties and hostilities and in summoning a contrived enthusiasm and commitment.⁵⁷⁹

This evaluation requires an aesthetic and formal consideration because the re-calibration of emotion as data requires both a formal and aesthetic imagining. If emotions are to be regulated as data, they must be transformed into externalities, and abstractions. This requires them to be rendered in some way, to be represented, or to be formalised as a device. An example of this could be the escalating stages that companies have in getting you to repay your debts. There are personal gentle written reminders, which draw the imposition of self-guilt, to the legal document and finally the instrumentalisation of violence with the bailiff. Those letters and words have an aesthetic, a particular form, which is taken to affect a response. For guilt to be used as a management strategy, it needs a form outside of the individual subject. I do not mean just in the sense, of say 'general' human guilt, but the consideration of how such an emotion could become a structural

⁵⁷⁷ This is also informed by Foucault's (1977) writing in *Discipline and Punish*, but taken out of the prison, and reconceptualised for the workplace.

⁵⁷⁸ Emotional Labour could be read as 'affective labour' Hardt (1999).

⁵⁷⁹ Southwood (2010:26)

facet within management.⁵⁸⁰ Guilt is understood as being comprised of both 'self-guilt' and the externalised form 'I must finish because he/she is watching'. Accordingly guilt is synthesised through the digital apparatus of 'Persochip' in *Private Life*, which can access both your 'personal mode' and your 'work mode' to generate a 'guilt-event' which functions to manage the worker. Such strategies we can identify today with CCTV surveillance of workers, bag checks, and constant reminders of obligation. Guilt is even used to normalise the structural conditions of the law of accumulation, which means that employment has become harder to come by, creating a false scarcity, meaning those 'in a job' feel obliged to stay, persuaded by the guilt of unemployment.⁵⁸¹ However guilt is not just used as a device in the video to delineate how the manager is managed, but we see his personal guilt interfering with his job responsibilities, as a result of those he manage suffering from conditions he imposes. This type of guilt could be understood as feedback: as the emotion used to manage is re-deployed for compassion causing the manager to lose control.

In order that this management strategy works, all facets of the worker's life must be re-programmed in unison with the central system; emotion left unquantified may deviate and cause problems in the system. For this reason I employed a 'surrogate' actor to 'play' all the roles in the managers life. This conduit for the subject, or surrogate for inter-personal relationships employed by the system, to play different roles, and provide different solutions, reflects the use of actors today in corporate role-plays and management solutions. All the social fabric of emotions and relationships, become networks of control, and, as subjectivity becomes material, it fuses with the agenda of capital. For this reason I selected a piece from *Le Mepris* (1963) by Jean-Luc Godard, as the backdrop for the scenes of the manager and his wife, shown in Figure 36. This is a conceptual and visual double-take, where the breakdown of a relationship mirrors the projection of the objectives of management through the apparatus of the family. The use of the couple in the film is both a formal device and representative of the breakdown of

⁵⁸⁰ Weber (1905) *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* and Marx (1976).

⁵⁸¹ See Marx (1976) *Capital* chapter 25 'The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation'.

relationships under the scrutiny of late capitalism. The scenes chosen were from two different 'couple' moments, this was to show the inter-changeability of the couple, as a formal concept, but also to confuse the manager given that he is witnessing three characters as 'his wife'. There is no discrete zone between personal and work life, in short there is no 'private life'.



Fig 36. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

Leo Bersani and Ulysee Dutoit write in *Forms of Being: Cinema, Aesthetics and Subjectivity* (2004) that Godard employs the couple in *Le Mepris* as a 'non-interpretive relation'.⁵⁸² As such, the couple in *Private Life* becomes both formal (relating to two halves, or opposites) and at the same time historical, what Bersani and Dutoit describe as the 'open totality'⁵⁸³ of the couple. This structures all the relationships in *Private Life*, they are neither specific nor general, everyone is 'standing in' for someone else, and no one at all. There is an inherent tension in the video between the binaries of: real/virtual, work/life, subject/object, and power/submission. These 'couples' only work in relation to each other. The simulated relationships in *Private Life* draw on the most intimate relationship – that of the romantic couple. This, then, as we see, becomes a failed attempt at communication or 'real' intimacy, as each

⁵⁸² Bersani and Dutoit (2004)

⁵⁸³ Bersani and Dutoit (2004:65)

couple misreads each other. In doing this I relied, like Godard on the 'third term'⁵⁸⁴ an object, or person (present or absent), who is present in each shot. I used the 'stand in' of the statue in Paul and Camille's apartment in *Le Mepris*, and in other scenes the prop; a stall with objects, the working sculptor, the working men, the absent co-workers, even the device of 'Persochip' used by the manager becomes a stand in for his relationship with others.

The 'agent' is the character who embodies a more traditional understanding of management. The 'agent' is a virtual avatar of the Tem. She does not exist as a person, but as programme administered by the Tem. Her actions and questions are fed by the wider 'agent' programme. Her limited abilities are challenged by the abnormal behaviour and interference, which she encounters during the interview. We all know too well the experience speaking to 'someone' who does not have the 'authority' to help, or even offer any advice as to where to seek help. I wanted to convey the frustration felt by the manager of having no one to ask for help; in a complex labyrinth of yes's and no's and 0' and 1's no advice is offered on what to do, yet the managers are chastised for any mistakes they make. Senior management has been outsourced to the 'agent' programme and the manager is the last 'human resource' as intermediary between the Tem and people. The manager consults a doctor at the end of the video, describing his symptoms as a lack of sleep, and pains in his back and arms. The doctor (or psychiatrist) dismisses the fatigue, and prescribes medication. The doctor's clinic 'backdrop' is taken from the Freud Museum in London and thus intentionally blurs the lines between emotional and physical wellbeing and treatment. This specific situation is interesting, for the research, in so far as, if we are to consider the use of emotion, or subjectivity in management, we must ask, does the use of subjectivity by capital then give greater weight to the idea of emotionality? The answer we see from the video is no. While emotion may be transformed into an entity, that is used to transform methods of control, it still has little or no place in the workplace as agency. The doctor,

⁵⁸⁴ Bersani and Dutoit (2004:60)

obviously another appendage of the Tem, is not interested in processing the emotional life of the manager, and thus transforms him into a biological mass, an abstraction. The irony is that when he returns to the agent the 'guilt event' is used to control his future behaviour (as is with debt) making him sure to 'report' illness in the future.

3.2 The Endless Working Day: Temporal Extraction

I now wish to extend the discussion I began in the first Chapter on time and temporality, but more specifically in relation to temporal extraction and the way time is depicted and understood in *Private Life*. Temporality is explored both formally, in terms of the medium of video, and the way time is expanded or compressed through digital technology, and conceptually in relation to the working day and absolute surplus value. In conceiving *Private Life* I was asking: how can we reconceptualise the idea of a 'private life', of a life outside of capital, in the face of the 24-hour working day? Considering the discussion of reproduction and commodification in the previous Chapter, how do we begin to understand the way that time outside of the working day is conceptualised? The term 'private life' works in two ways: firstly, in considering our experiences that are outside of both the working day and capital, which are indeed 'private' or non-commoditised, and should be fought to remain so. Secondly, I believe it is important to make a critique of the concept of 'private' in terms of private property under capital.⁵⁸⁵ This by no means denies the desire and reality of 'free time', but it is important to identify the cyclical relationship between maintaining a sense of 'privacy' from capital and doing so by buying privacy or 'leisure time'. This compulsion to buy 'privacy' ironically ends up defeating the object of attempting to live outside of capital. When everything is private, there is no public. Time then is broken into segments like bundles of commodities, or equivalents, it is exchanged for other things – perhaps leisure commodities, family 'time', shopping, or playing sport.

⁵⁸⁵ Sohn-Rethel (1978)

Adorno picks up the ‘problem’ of commoditised leisure time in his writing on the culture industry. He explains that ‘free time is shackled by its opposite’ and ‘depends on the totality of social conditions’⁵⁸⁶ and consequently what is ‘free’ is only understood by what is not. Adorno claims, as Lukács does, that the logic of reification penetrates into time which is apparently ‘free’, resulting in a ‘profit-oriented social life.’⁵⁸⁷ The movement in *Private Life* between the private domain of work, to the private sphere of the home, is made only symbolically; the manager’s wife doubles as his boss and the way he relates to those he manages is as friends. There is an intentional blurring which not only reflects on the penetration of the value-form into the social, but considers the way that personal desire is used to contort time during the workday. Adorno writes that ‘free time is nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labour’,⁵⁸⁸ and this shadow, albeit a virtual memory, follows the manager through the entirety of his day. The video takes place in the ‘personal mode’ of the manager; he is ‘giving up’ his ‘own’ time for a virtual meeting and reprimand from his superior. This is only able to take place because the manager is ‘plugged’ into virtual space (Figure 36), which is the privately owned space of the company Persochip.

This is not a ‘Science Fiction’ however, because managers often call workers outside of working hours; workers are expected to work into the evenings and through lunch breaks. In this example I demonstrate the way technology makes more time and space ‘available’ to us; but at a cost. Persochip has access to all of time, it can go back and replay time, indeed it reconstitutes time-as-measure through the recording of all time. Time – the past and future is privatised; there is no ‘free’ time-only private time – which you pay for. Jonathan Crary in his invocation of 24/7 time explains that ‘billions of dollars are spent every year researching how to reduce decision-making time, how to eliminate the useless time of reflection and contemplation’.⁵⁸⁹ Accordingly, the manager is chastised by his superior, wife, and doctor (all now

⁵⁸⁶ Adorno (1991:187)

⁵⁸⁷ Adorno (1991:189)

⁵⁸⁸ Adorno (1991:194)

⁵⁸⁹ Crary (2013:40)

appendages of capital), for wasting his time. In *Private Life* when the manager meets an old colleague who has moved to the only space outside of the Tem (or capital) the slum or 'Shee Town', the manager is incredulous at why she/he would want to leave. She/he answers "my days were spent as a manager...all of my days, my dreams, my wife, my life". The idea of having 'spent' your day works in two ways, firstly as it equates time with money, and secondly, as it alludes to the finality of the action of extraction, represented by the labourers vanquished body. However if there is no time left outside of capital (but only the detritus of capital), can we find a moment of reprieve in the waste, or by-products of capital? This reoccurring narrative 'the toxic waste-land' and 'the rubbish dump'⁵⁹⁰ in Science Fiction and fantasy, latches onto the notion that what is 'cast out' can no longer be extracted from. This concept does contain potentiality, which is why I do employ these spaces as 'back-drops' in the video trilogy. However I have also been careful to not 'celebrate' spaces of non-reproduction as dislocated entities or time zones.



Fig 36. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

⁵⁹⁰ It is for this reason that scenes of rubbish dumps provide the backdrop for parts of *Private Life* and *Synophresia Nervosa*, this however has a second layer as one of the scenes is from *Waste Land* (2012) by Lucy Walker, a film about artist Vik Munoz who uses the rubbish dump as site for 'artistic expression'. This recycling of non-reproduction into art, which is brought and sold, shows that under capitalism nothing is 'wasted'.

Marx's chapter on the working day informed both the making of *Private Life* and the way I came to conceptualise time in the trilogy; as both objective and subjective, and as an object of measurement and a subject of punishment.⁵⁹¹ It is through the working day, its conceptualisation, its reduction, and extension, that we can measure absolute surplus value. In order for me to conceptualise and then attempt to represent accumulation and extraction I needed to consider the working day and its temporality to get a sense of where new openings or divisions have emerged. While discussions of time cannot be separated from discussions of value, and socially necessary labour time, it is still important to consider time like labour-power as both abstract and concrete. When time is contorted by global time zones, changes to the working day, and technology, how does this affect the value of what is being produced? Or to reverse this formulation: how does the type of labour affect time itself? Marx writes that 'the establishment of a *normal* working day is the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and worker.'⁵⁹² While Marx identifies that the capitalist desires to extend the working day to the full 24 hour cycle (which is done through shift systems and currently through global production systems), he does point to the fact that it is in the interests of capitalism that the worker have the 'time' needed to maintain their own reproduction. This is represented by the constant push/pull between the coercive laws of the market and the needs of the worker to reproduce herself. Time can be understood as both linear and cyclical under capital, as Moishe Postone identifies with the shift from religious temporality to calendar, and then hour time with the prominence in the late medieval period of the mechanical clock tower.⁵⁹³ Postone does not attribute the technical invention of the mechanical clock with the conception of abstract time; time which has no relation to the natural rhythms of the day; but abstract time 'must be understood in terms of the "practical" constitution of such time, that is, with reference to an emergent form of social relations that gave rise to constant time units.'⁵⁹⁴ This means that the social relations of emerging capitalism

⁵⁹¹ Marx (1976)

⁵⁹² Marx (1976:382)

⁵⁹³ Postone (1993)

⁵⁹⁴ Postone (1993:212)

gave rise to the use of clock-time as measure and, as Postone rightly claims, the mechanism of clock time was used as a form of domination by the bourgeoisie, which in turn meant that 'time expenditure is transformed from a result of activity into a normative measure for activity.'⁵⁹⁵

The precision of Fordist techniques of production and the exact measurement of activity in temporal units became the natural extension of the clock-tower. What I explore in terms of temporal domination in *Private Life*, is the use of measurement in terms of digital or computer technology, for not only measuring time, but for recording and thus capturing all time, as we see in Figure 37. So, not only can activity be measured, it can be stored as data, or extracted, and played back as a device to control workers.⁵⁹⁶ Marx's theory of the commodity as bearing the value of the socially necessary labour time captured in its making, relies on the notion of linear clock-time. This linear time however, is not, according to George Caffentzis, strictly measurable, as it depends 'upon the operation of the whole capitalist productive system over a cycle.'⁵⁹⁷ As Caffentzis explains, this is a 'field quality' and relies on the total reproduction of capital. Therefore, it is hard to truly assess the value of time without taking on board what happens both in and outside of the working day.

⁵⁹⁵ Postone (1993:215)

⁵⁹⁶ Charlie Chaplin already prophesised this in *Modern Times*, when the tramp's boss shows up on a screen, when he smokes in the bathroom.

⁵⁹⁷ Caffentzis (2013:83)



Fig 37. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

This conflict between abstract and concrete processes within time motivates numerous stratagems by the capitalist, but also defines class struggle. It is for this reason Sami Khatib explains that the time of capital is both ‘time as measure (quantity) and time as a social relation (quality)’⁵⁹⁸ and accordingly:

the category of abstract labour already implies a social mode of ‘time-as-measure’ which is not merely a concept applied to a given mode of production but the very *production* of this standard qua abstract labour time-unit.⁵⁹⁹

Khatib explains that this temporal unit is never fixed and forms part of what Marx called the ‘struggle for a normal working day’. *Private Life* therefore takes place after the period of the ‘normal working day’, pointing to the changing time of the working day and the elasticity of time under capital. And because time under capital exists both quantitatively (measure) and qualitatively (social), productive-time and labour-time must always be understood in relation to reproductive time. The measure of ‘socially necessary labour time’ posits ‘time’ historically and geographically⁶⁰⁰ and, therefore, we must always view time in context of its social conditions. For this reason, in the trilogy, the removal of temporal boundaries between the

⁵⁹⁸ Khatib (2010:51)

⁵⁹⁹ Khatib (2010:52)

⁶⁰⁰ Tomba (2009)

working day and reproduction, creates a culture of work, which permeates into 'private life'. And because the labour carried out by the manager can be seen as 'immaterial' we see the further estrangement of labour from use-value, or from measureable productivity.

Labour therefore becomes measured in different units and at different 'times' or through a different 'use' values. The bio-mechanic appendages the managers wear, are in effect, there to measure labour-time and productivity. As labour becomes more intangible, and 'outcomes' are read as data, labour is not read, simply just in terms of temporal units, but, as we see in Figure 38, through the abstract inventory of emotions, thoughts, and relationships. This new technological device – like the mechanical clock – does not represent a 'new' type of extraction per se, but can be read in terms of both relative and absolute surplus value. The sly trick of the superior 'cornering' the worker before he leaves for an 'impromptu' meeting represents a tactic by the capitalist in squeezing just a little bit more surplus from the worker. But this was also enacted in order to question how labour outside of the working day can affect value and change time itself.⁶⁰¹ Time in the trilogy may be extended and abstracted through 'time travel', but it still constitutes the frame of reference for extraction through the labour theory of value. The continual need of workers today (and the characters in the trilogy) to speak of: time-saving, wasting time, of being 'overloaded' or stressed, of 'making' time, point to the continual validity of the time-as-measure theory of value under capital.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰¹ Operaismo became concerned with labour and work outside of the productive sphere of the factory at a time when they saw the closure or mechanisation of factory work coupled with the more penetrative role of the state.

⁶⁰² de Angelis and Harvie (2009)

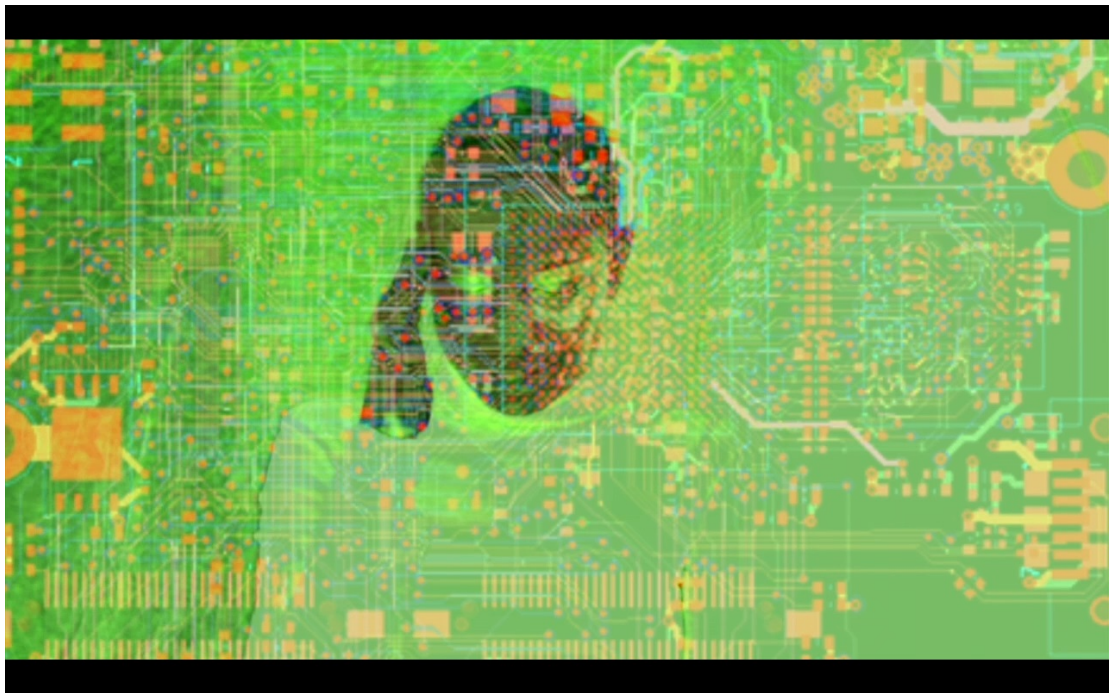


Fig 38. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

Because the manager is approached by his superior ‘outside’ of his working day, the ‘rules’ of the working day no longer apply. The manager has a ‘choice’, to leave or refuse the meeting, he does not have to comply with how *his* time is being used. This opens up questions about the shifting locus of power in relation to the ‘protection’ of workers rights, which historically do not exist outside of the working day and therefore in this period of greater precarity for workers makes the worker more vulnerable to exploitation. That is, those who work ‘outside’ of time in ‘under the table’ or illegal jobs have no rights and can be exploited even further. In *Private Life* we witness the ‘liberated’ nature of contemporary capitalism to access workers at ‘anytime’. Consequently, if time has become more ‘fluid’ we need to ask; who does this benefit? If time is commodified (that is producing exchange-value) it does not matter how ‘fluid’ or flexible this time is, it still creates surplus value for capitalism. As Alan Tuckman explains the disintegration of ‘social’ working hours under neoliberalism represents the eroding of the social nature of the working week, and weekends – demonstrated previously through laws like ‘time-and a half.’⁶⁰³ This new ‘flexible time’ is claimed to better suit the

⁶⁰³ Tuckman (2005)

'needs' of the worker, allowing them to 'fit in' their reproductive tasks around workdays.

The Trilogy explores time as a technique of extraction and measurement, but it also employs time and its relationship with history as a formal device. Historical time functions within the trilogy to reflect on the different temporalities, which currently exist simultaneously and are reflected in the shifting nature of formal and real subsumption. Historical time punctuates the trilogy through the use of 'dated' aesthetics and work practices. *Private Life* is concerned with time-travel and with how different forms of labour and life have become encapsulated within capital time. This can be read both politically in terms of global domination, but also in terms of the production of cultural representations, of 'times' and 'cultures' in film and media. It is for this reason that I employ a range of cultural 'clichés' or popular cultural misrepresentations within the video as backdrops. In moving through 'historical' time, through interiors and popular representations this time is recalibrated as data, all of time or history, shall we say, has become the domain of capital. This reflects on Benjamin's claim that the 'manifestations of historicism are claimed by the victor'.⁶⁰⁴ Even the vestiges of class struggle can become part of the tableaux of bourgeois fantasies of progress. The appropriation of culture by capital follows the appropriation of time. However, in collapsing all time into a device to own both the past and future the Tem in *Private Life* have removed the capacity to imagine a future outside of capital. Frederic Jameson writes that in *Capital Vol 1* Marx insists that capital effaces its own prehistory⁶⁰⁵ and therefore capitalism:

knows no such beginning but rather reaches back to transform all these individual first times into a repetition that always preceded its individual instances. This is then the way in which the present of capitalism as a system "extinguishes" its seemingly constitutive moments and elements in the past. This is the sense in which capitalist production is an infernal machine, an autotelic system.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Benjamin *On the Concept of History* (1999).

⁶⁰⁵ Jameson (2011:105)

⁶⁰⁶ Tuckman (2005:106-107)

In accepting this version of capital as a-historical we become complicit in the erasure of future and past and ignore what Jameson identifies as the desire or impulse for Utopia or wish-fulfilment.⁶⁰⁷ What, then, would happen once this capacity (for a future or past) was removed, what forms outside of daydreams or outside of labour-time would class struggle take?

Althusser claims revolutionary consciousness is anti-historical⁶⁰⁸ and therefore historicism is 'ideology because it reproduces itself, rather than over determining its own conditions of production to create revolution.'⁶⁰⁹ This would suggest that the 'timelessness' or a-historical conditions created in *Private Life* and indeed in capitalism generate a unique environment for the production of the 'present' and the conditions for revolution. Nevertheless, only one possible 'revolutionary' response was explored in the *Private Life* – that of a virus or infection, a feedback loop, from the choked throat where histories past and future has been squeezed. This is represented by the glitches within the program Persochip, but could as easily be explained by Benjamin's 'jetztzeit' or a 'negation of time'. As Khatib explains 'this inner loop within time allowing for jetztzeit is not co-optable by capital-time'⁶¹⁰ because it comes from within the productive time of capital, and feeds on the conditions of class struggle, working as 'an inner loop that derails capital-time's trajectory.'⁶¹¹ The virus, which feeds on capital time, on the compressed data of abstract human labour in the objects of history and culture, gives 'us time to free and retroactively redeem the contracted, congealed time encapsulated in capital-time.'⁶¹² It is made clear in *Private Life* that this virus is the very stuff of the imposed conditions of capital time. Like an auto-immune virus which springs from the climate of toxicity, the body of the proletariat returns in viral form to break the circuitry. This mode of auto-resistance is again repeated through the production of the video as a work of art, which 'derives from the productive gap between the temporality

⁶⁰⁷ Jameson (2007) *Archaeologies of the Future*, I am concerned here with the first part of this collection, where Jameson locates the utopia impulse within cultural texts and critical theory, and then employs the utopian as a method of investigation throughout the text.

⁶⁰⁸ Althusser and Balibar (1970:119-120)

⁶⁰⁹ Jorgensen (2009) 'Towards a Revolutionary Science Fiction'.

⁶¹⁰ Khatib (2010:61)

⁶¹¹ Khatib (2010:61)

⁶¹² Khatib (2010)

of art praxis and the temporality of political praxis'⁶¹³ as Roberts argues. As art withdraws from the 'temporal compression and acceleration'⁶¹⁴ of capital it exists as both anti-historical and against time-as-measure. However this still leaves the question regarding capital's deliberate erasure, or in fact subversion (Figure 39) of historical time pressing, as if capital already knows how to be a-historical and a-temporal by evoking the processes to abstraction perhaps in evoking 'all-time' in the video, I am reminding capital of its past in order to steal its future.



Fig 39. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

3.3 Virtual Space and Digital labour: Relative Surplus Extraction

I now want to use Marx's concept of relative surplus value to address what has been described as digital labour, the 'separation' of the 'real' and virtual, and the further mechanisation of life. If the previous section aimed to address the way time is employed in *Private Life* and as a tool for extending absolute surplus value, then here I will look into the way that technology is used in the video to extract value from employees. In turn, I will contextualise this

⁶¹³ Roberts (2015b:40)

⁶¹⁴ Roberts (2015b:40)

problem and consider the place of technology and virtuality in global relative surplus extraction.

The creation, management, and exploration of virtual space or digital space leads us directly to ask the question of: who makes this space, who owns it, who profits from it, and who lives in it? This directed me to make many assumptions about the nature of virtual space in a capitalist economy. I wanted the video to illuminate the often unseen control that exists in the privately owned sphere of the corporate web. I wanted the act of meeting your boss as an avatar to reflect the amount of time, many spend engaging with recorded messages, computer programmes and the specifically programmed web settings and preferences created by say Twitter, Google and Apple. I am not arguing that dissent cannot and does not exist on the Internet, but I do ask, on the whole, if the sphere of virtuality is dominated by a logic of extraction first and foremost.⁶¹⁵ The manager in *Private Life* is able to 'escape' momentarily before he begins the interview, and we are to assume he gains some pleasure from the experience, as do most Internet users. But on watching the menacing documentary by Beeban Kidron *In Real Life* (2013), we are made aware that a huge amount of research is being put into understanding how to captivate and colonise the space of the mind through interface and LCD screens. The dopamine released by the action and response 'kick' we get from engaging with specific websites has made screens as addictive as recreational drugs, and considerably more widespread.⁶¹⁶ Of course like the factory, the Internet offers both constraints and potentiality and the machinic aspects alone, are not in themselves the drivers of exploitation.

Numerous positions within cognitive capitalism⁶¹⁷ have attempted to address this new colonization of our minds, thoughts and attention, and have

⁶¹⁵ The culture of Silicon Valley and the digital 'startup' is a perfect emblem of this. Each venture seeks to create needs and 'apps' to extract values from smaller and smaller fragments of our lives.

⁶¹⁶ The film *In Real Life*, deal exclusively with teenagers who have internet addiction, more recently this article in the Guardian by Ghorayshi discusses 'Google glass addiction' of which the description came almost from the pages of the scripts for both *Private Life* and *Synophresia Nervosa*: <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/oct/14/google-glass-user-treated-addiction-withdrawal-symptoms> and similar cases in China documented by the BBC in *Web Junkies: China's Web Addicted Teens* (2014).

⁶¹⁷ See Berardi (2009) Vercellone (2006) and *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism* (2014) edited by Neidich and De Boever.

considered the way devices are specifically constructed around human neurology. Jonathan Beller and Tiziana Terranova both write in *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism* (2013) that 'attention' has become a new domain of contestation in the economy of information. Terranova writes that 'hyper-attention and hypo-attention expresses, what from the view of capital, is both a limit and a new source of potential extraction of value.'⁶¹⁸ Because, as inattentive workers browse through the Internet, they are not able to engage with either work or consumption, but they are also not able to distinguish between the two.⁶¹⁹ I spent a short time recently in a mobile phone shop, and the wall-to-wall LCD screens, music, cheery staff and 'interactive' space reminded me not just of the pervasiveness of the screen, but of how I 'should' be interacting with this equipment, and the kind of experience I should be having.

Seb Franklin explains that we must differentiate between the image and the way attention is grasped and stored in computer interfaces. While the history of the image in film and photography provided a template for how the image is now used, in computer interfaces, a clear separation between the viewer as passive and active is marked by user interfaces. Franklin asks whether what we see in the computer is the subsumption of the image, and not the image as dominant sense-forms,⁶²⁰ as he writes:

What would the image-type be if media were valorized not only through their purchase as commodities but also through the active process of consumption they stimulated?...the image produced for software interfaces, video games, and websites demands an instant response...This type of image would not be a movement-image or a time-image but an action-image.⁶²¹

In the 'action-image' we can understand not only the relationship between the user and the interface, but we can understand the way this type of image or text is used as a device to structure events in time. We can read the interface as always 'pointing outwards, away from conscience and culpability' to

⁶¹⁸ Terranova (2013:58)

⁶¹⁹ Chaplin's cog in the machine imagery Beller identifies as Fordist, where a contemporary version of attention could be reflected in *Timecode* 2000 or more succinctly 'clips' on Youtube, which try to 'capture' the multiplicities of the 'global' subject.

⁶²⁰ Franklin (2011:6)

⁶²¹ Franklin (2011:5)

‘empowerment granted by total connection’,⁶²² a connection which ironically contracts while it expands and consequently, as Hito Steyerl observes:

Your phone driving you through this journey, driving you mad, extracting value, whining like a baby...bombarding you with maddening...outrageous claims for time, space attention...It copy pastes your life to countless unintelligible pictures that have no meaning...It is being tracked and scanned...A digital eye as your heart in hand.⁶²³



Fig 40. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

The role of machines in mediating our lived experience, is explained by Marx when he identifies machines as dead labour. Marx explains that machinery in industry soaks up ‘the special skill of each machine-operator’ and transforms it, turning the ‘mass of social labour’ into the ‘system of machinery.’⁶²⁴ Devices for communication like the mobile phone or PersoChip (Figure 40), are however machines built around the individuated subject,⁶²⁵ and exemplify a hybrid or cyborg of human-machine. Consequently if emotions are

⁶²² Sanderson (2013) ‘Human Resolution’.

⁶²³ Steyerl (2013:117)

⁶²⁴ Marx quoted in Heinrich (2013:211).

⁶²⁵ Lazzarato (2014:26)

embodied in the machine, the machine has become embodied in the subject. For this reason all digital devices used in the trilogy are very much modelled on the body, in colour and organic shape. They reflect the externalisation of the body into the network, and the growing symbiosis between technology and the body. We are reminded in my video *Forever Living*, by entrepreneur Eddy Chai that “you must never only use your own hands”. Which reflects the cyborg nature of capitalism as it needs the living labour of others to create value.

In reading Donna Haraway’s prophetic text *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) we find an insightful analysis of technology and the body, which is at once rightly damning of the way technology reinforces ideas of nature and the construction of gender and race; but on the other hand, she identifies the potentiality in a cyborg consciousness, a transcendence of and a ‘regeneration’ from old structures of militarism and patriarchal capitalism:

a cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualism without end...The machine is not an it to be animated, worshipped and dominated. The machine is us.⁶²⁶

Haraway imagines the cyborg as the mutant future, or the ‘re-grown limb’, which is ‘monstrous’ and ‘potent’ in which the ‘utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender’ could emerge. However as Haraway rightly argues both computers and communications technologies rely upon the international division of labour, migrant labour, ‘feminisation’ of work and class exploitation in order to function as a dominant force in capitalism. This creates technological nightmares not high tech utopias:

Technologies like video games and highly miniaturized televisions [this ‘miniaturized television screen is now the mobile phone or tablet] seem crucial to production of modern forms of ‘private life’. The culture of video games is heavily oriented to individual competition and extra-terrestrial warfare...⁶²⁷ (my brackets added)

⁶²⁶ Haraway (1991:180)

⁶²⁷ Haraway (1991:168)



Fig 41. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

So technology is cyborg, it is both emancipatory and bound to structures of domination in capitalism which not only recreate new systems of exploitation, but new cultural experiences which seek to dissuade the worker from resistance. Yet I still believe that technology and science removed from the exchange relationship of profit and exploitation, contain revolutionary potential, and this is why the terrain of Science Fiction still holds an element of utopic possibility or a space for dissent in art. Accordingly feedback, infection and malfunction are used in the video to depict a technological cycle, which begins to break down. The limits of the virtual-as-method for extraction are only met when we reach the limits of capitalist production. Whether this is the 'falling rate of profit', or via Rosa Luxemburg's idea of the diminishing capacity for capital to exploit zones outside of itself – every form of exploitation has its limits.

As all-life from the workplace to the bathroom (Figure 41), becomes commodified through the capture of all of our experiences as data, both future and past are written as code which is regulated like finance capital by algorithms. This cycle of capture and programme begins to eat itself as experiences and the subject are pre-programmed by the very devices, which aim to capture the experience. However this 'capturing' is not as benign as

storing your web preferences. The case of Microsoft allowing NSA⁶²⁸ to have access to users files, emails and Skype conversations, shows a deep level of control and surveillance, and a relationship between government and corporate interests. Ali Dur and McKenzie Wark explain in their paper *New New Babylon* (2011) that:

The digital is the means by which all the capacities of the body become proletarianized. To become proletarian is to be excluded from the process of production as anything but its object. This exclusion has more recently extended beyond material labour...and so beyond production, to the realm not only of consumption but into the pores of everyday life.⁶²⁹

Video artists Hito Steyerl and Ryan Trecartin, both interrogate the digital world and the subjects who inhabit it, albeit it from very different positions. Trecartin's *P.opular s.ky (section-ish)* (2009) a highly neurotic, camp and narcissistic individual subject is posed and reposed with the aid of popular media techniques and performed actions: the 'selfie', the reality T.V show, and the blog. All of which are satirised in this hyperspace, akin to early Paul McCarthy, however like Youtube it is never ending, there is no space to interrogate or allow us to ask questions, we must be taken on this ride, unfortunately the ride is all too familiar, and like pop art which draws heavily on the images of advertising, it falls back too swiftly, into the popular world from which it springs. The real question to be asked, then, is: how can we use the tools of détournement⁶³⁰ within digital culture, if this culture is already made up of so many 'détournes'? Steyerl's artwork *How Not To Be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .Mov File* (2013) attempts to do so, be it in the same low-fi digital post-production-meets-performance manner. Reversing the trend of 'look at me' which comes with the media-drenched and hyper surveilled world we live in, she advises in mock self-help or advertisement style, to become invisible. Steyerl knows the image is all-pervasive, and considers ways to become unseen, itself a reactionary stance. Employing the technical elements of imagery (pixels, resolution, fade out, CGI) as is they

⁶²⁸ Guardian article on NSA scandal by Arthur and Rushe (2013):

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/12/microsoft-twitter-rivals-nsa-requests>

⁶²⁹ Dur and Wark (2011:45)

⁶³⁰ Debord and Wolman (1956)

were in fact revolutionary actions, she demonstrates how we can become covert.

3.4 Digital Labour: From the Mine to the Data Mine

When developing *Private Life* I imagined a smooth veneer of digital interface that ran around the many nodes and glitches of that fictional world. But because domination is never complete ‘feedback’, glitches and viruses begin to plague the system. The system (much like our world) is run on human labour, on sweat and blood, but in a ‘weightless’, ‘material-less’ digital world Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism as congealed labour, is further disguised and disjointed by the global division of labour. I imagined beginning to see the labour concealed in the technological goods I was using, or buying, or the web servers we use every day, like a glowing trace of commodity fetishism, each hour etched into the circuit boards or LCD screen. I saw the threads that attach the international division of labour being pulled to reveal that advanced communications technology in one place, is reflected in absolute surplus extraction and primitive accumulation in another. This made me question the ‘freedom’ afforded by iPhones, Facebook, and online shopping, when corporations monitor and extract information from you. Jodi Dean explains:

Expanded and intensified communicativity neither enhances opportunities for linking together political struggles nor enlivens radical democratic practices...the deluge of screens and spectacles coincides with extreme corporatization, financialization, and privatization across the globe. Rhetorics of access, participation, and democracy work ideologically to secure the technological structure of neoliberalism.⁶³¹

Communications technologies and ICTs function as an effective tool in the hands of capital, as they allow the image of unhindered ‘openness’ that liberal democracy requires. They stand in the place of real access to democracy or a commons. They function in one mode as representative of

⁶³¹ Dean (2013:23)

the technological and scientific developments of capitalism,⁶³² declaring the 'open' and 'accepting' nature of neoliberalism, while simultaneously enacting the opposite. Computers, smartphones, and consoles are high-end commodities and offer private services, which can be seen as exploiting the 'free' labour needed to put such devices into practice.



Fig 42. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

I began to wonder if ICTs and their use as personal objects for labour reflect a fragmented 'outsourcing' of constant capital. Are we paying for the machines, which we work for capital with? And therefore does the internet and life online represent an extension of the working day to 24 hours? And, could, as many authors have claimed, we be duped into working as what Terranova has identified as 'free labourers'?⁶³³ The role of ICTs and the Internet constitute the 'network society'⁶³⁴ and subsequently interpreted by theorists as 'immaterial' or virtual, and for some constituting Marx's vision of the general intellect or for others a 'radical break',⁶³⁵ denoting a transformation in capitalism itself. However the utopian dream of a

⁶³² See Smith 'Technology and History in Capitalism' (2004).

⁶³³ Terranova (2004)

⁶³⁴ See Castells (2006) *Rise of the Network Society*, but note that Castells theories have been critiqued by authors such as Dean and Huws for the emphasis on how 'different' or revolutionary this construct really is.

⁶³⁵ Fuchs (2014)

networked society providing the platform for a new revolution, or commons, has quickly turned to dust and as Terranova points out:

Far from being an 'unreal', empty space, the Internet is animated by cultural and technical labour through and through, a continuous production of value which is completely immanent in the flows of the network society at large.⁶³⁶

Terranova identifies that 'the Internet is deeply connected to the development of late post-industrial societies as a whole.'⁶³⁷ The role of computers and the Internet in financialisation and the acceleration of global trade are testament to this. But more importantly, and echoing Harraway's Cyborg, digital cultures and the logic of the internet originated 'within a field which is always already capitalism.'⁶³⁸ The Internet may be the illegitimate child of post-industrial capitalism but on the whole this child now works for its parents.

Digital labour has been theorised as 'immaterial' or 'weightless',⁶³⁹ however this position fails to acknowledge the very material and productive base of capitalism and of the ICT industry itself. Ursula Huws identifies many of the pitfalls of this 'immaterial' approach taken in the 90s, and explains what she sees as a twofold process: where ideologies about a weightless or knowledge economy disguised the commodification of many processes of reproduction while simultaneously intensifying industrial labour⁶⁴⁰ (in the global South).⁶⁴¹ Drawing on Marx, Huws reminds us that:

The ability of capitalism to generate new commodities can seem almost magical, as though they are being conjured out of the air in a perfect reversal of the 'dematerialisation' hypothesis. We must remind ourselves, however that their raw materials come from the earth and that the only magic involved is human inventiveness and labour.⁶⁴²

Consequently, what is often left out of 'immaterial' and 'cognitive' labour arguments, is that these technologies are indeed facilitated, as Huws argues,

⁶³⁶ Terranova (2004:74)

⁶³⁷ Terranova (2004:75)

⁶³⁸ Ibid (80)

⁶³⁹ Castelles (2006)

⁶⁴⁰ Huws (2012)

⁶⁴¹ Huws 'The Making of the Cybertariat' (2001) where Huws deconstructs the fantasy of digital labour.

⁶⁴² Huws (1999:35)

by specific commodities made of specific materials, as a result of highly specialised labour. This is not to deny that ‘immaterial’ practices of computerised and software aided labour exist. In fact it could be argued that these ‘immaterial’ practices or technologies aid the invisibility of other types of labour. The virtual works by disguising the predominantly global South labour which makes the hardware, but it also hides the labour we do every day, which Terranova calls ‘free labour’. However in redirecting the focus to the materiality of immateriality one begins to see not only the wider global network of production, but also the specific role of materiality in art production, parodied and allegorised in Figure 42. I was using materials, a huge range of them in producing the video trilogy and wanted a way of contextualising the material and the labour that made sense of the material in a global context.

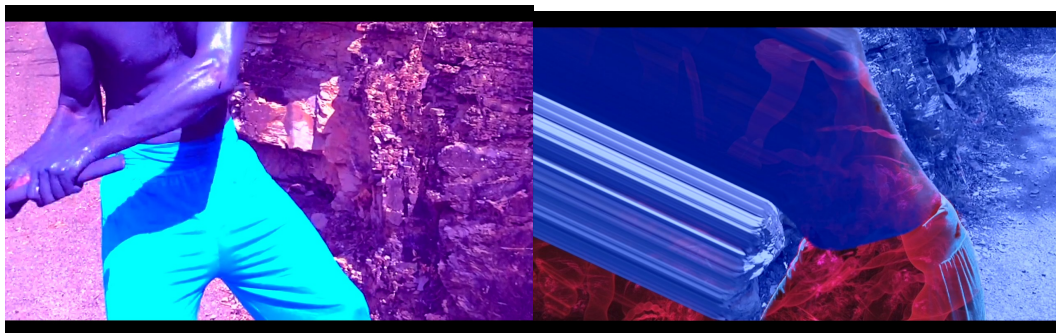


Fig 43/44. Video Still *Private Life* (2011)

Therefore, I needed to understand the way that immaterial labour is put into motion by material labour, namely, production in the global South. Christian Fuchs' work *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (2014) compiles a thorough analysis of the different modalities of extraction, accumulation and exploitation along with what he describes as the chain of computer and communications technologies or digital labour. This chain begins in the Congo, routed via Foxconn in China, spends time with software developers in India and is put together through 'piece' meal outsourcing in Silicon Valley – to be finally enacted by the users. Fuchs uses a Marxist analysis to explain that not only does ICT production and product development represent forms of wage exploitation identical to those found on the pages of *Capital*, but we can also see forms of primitive accumulation, slavery, rent extraction, and the

reserve army of labour engaged at each point through this global process.⁶⁴³ Huws explains further, that while mining and manufacture for virtual commodities takes place out of sight it still relies heavily on labour and wage exploitation to produce an infrastructure of material tools, without which the internet would not exist.⁶⁴⁴ Huws also emphasises that this productive labour for virtual products still only accounts for 20% of world production, meaning that other sites of production must still be investigated and addressed in global capitalism.⁶⁴⁵ This, however, does not mute the importance of considering the labour and resources involved in producing the 'virtual economy'. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) produces 21% of the world's coltan, required for the production of smartphones. The DRC is engaged in a long and violent civil war, this coupled with the infiltration of neoliberal policies, such as the privatization of mining⁶⁴⁶ means the DRC is a site of unprecedented global mineral extraction. The conditions of these mines are something of a Victorian nightmare, in the eastern DRC the in mines of Bisie and Omate, we see modern forms of slavery, which include 'forced labour enforced by armed groups, debt bondage, sexual slavery, forced marriage, the use of children by armed groups, and other forms of child slavery.'⁶⁴⁷ The wagedworkers that 'voluntarily' work in the mines, work in such unsafe and poor conditions their life expectancy is severely reduced. Coupled with the high rents for mining in the camps, and a pittance earned for minerals, this means that different forms of wage and slave exploitation co-exist.

The act of mining informs all three videos in the trilogy (Figure 43-44). Mining is the physical action analogous to extraction. It also grounds the trilogy within history, given that mining punctuates the differing logics of accumulation throughout historical time. Therefore in terms of the global struggle around labour, mining remains fundamental as a site of exploitation and class consciousness. Intensive mining is one of the most potent signifiers of the industrial revolution, but it is not far behind the reach of

⁶⁴³ Fuchs (2014) compiles a range of ethnographic examples from each of these zones.

⁶⁴⁴ Huws (2014)

⁶⁴⁵ Huws (2014:86)

⁶⁴⁶ Nest (2011) *Coltan*

⁶⁴⁷ Free the Slaves (2011:11) quoted in Fuchs (2014:176) *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*.

'cognitive capitalism' today.⁶⁴⁸ Therefore mines can be read as a site where different temporalities and forms of labour co-exist. Importantly the global mining industry, employs a range of techniques (directly and indirectly) for extraction and accumulation, from slavery, to primitive accumulation, and of course wage labour itself. Echoing the centrality of mining in the post-Fordist economy, *Keela Mine* mines both resources and bodies. In *Synophresia Nervosa* it is ideas and emotions, and in *Private Life* it is data and time. The managers data is being mined, he facilitates his own mining, or shall we say 'self-mining.' Data mining and 'big data' are concepts that inform our digital lives, data mining is a technique developed in social research, which is now used widely for commercial purposes. It encapsulates the consumer preferences of those in the global North, with the very physical action of resource mining and productive labour in the global South.



Fig 45. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

China is now the largest producer of ICT components but still only owns a fraction of the major ICT corporations. The massive urbanisation in China over the last 30 years has recreated the conditions described by Marx in England after the enclosure of the commons, and is described by Saskia

⁶⁴⁸ Manifesta 9 (2012) 'The Deep of Modern' was specifically dedicated to mining and industrial labour, its lineage, and its current place in global labour.

Sassen as a form contemporary primitive accumulation.⁶⁴⁹ The massive drive to production in China is indicative of the new international division of labour, which explicitly shows that material based labour still underpins the global economy. Companies such as Foxconn based in China⁶⁵⁰ have been accused of massive exploitation of workers, who are often composed of rural workers, immigrants, and young women who are isolated and driven to work 12 hours per day, 6 days per week, when a new product is being created.⁶⁵¹ Living conditions are cramped dormitory style, and 80 hours work per month of overtime is unpaid.⁶⁵² This pattern of exploitation of resources and labour, is of course repeated across other industries, but I am interested in the specific discontinuity between conditions of 'grubby' labour and mining, and the sleek virtual space sold to us by corporations such as Apple. As a worker from Foxconn explained when the iPhone 5 came out they were forced to work extra hours with no pay,⁶⁵³ but few of the employees of Foxconn could actually afford an iPhone 5 themselves.⁶⁵⁴

Private Life explores what could happen as these virtual walls break down, as the physical labour underpinning the digital veneer begins to show through in Figure 45. The manager begins to see fragments of this labour as his interrogation takes place. The pickaxe is wielded into the digital fabric, which bends like organic material, part corpse, and part network. This thin veneer is unable to contain the violence hidden within and breaks through, disrupting the digital fabric in viral form. The manager is shown, like so many of us, consumed by our virtual world, glued to his touch screen. It is because of the time he spends in this world, that the actions of the labour underpinning it start to synthesise in him, causing the calluses on his hands and pain in his muscles through sympathetic simulation. This represents the limits of capital, the limits of exploitation, as the worker breaks through the virtual plane. Although as we see geographical boundaries now separate these two

⁶⁴⁹ Sassen (2010) (2014), Chan (2013)

⁶⁵⁰ Who produce components for Apple, Dell and many smartphones.

⁶⁵¹ Fuchs (2014:188)

⁶⁵² SACOM quoted in Fuchs (2014:187).

⁶⁵³ This was brought into international consciousness when it was reported that workers were jumping out of factories to kill themselves: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/petercohan/2012/01/26/23-died-building-your-iworld-time-to-boycott-apple/>

⁶⁵⁴ See Chan (2013) 'A Suicide Survivor: The Life of a Chinese Worker'.

spheres and Chinese Government Officials are quick to dispute industrial action or protest in ICT production. There are still limits to exploitation and the breakdown of the immaterial and its transformation into the corporeal body in *Private Life* became a way of exploring this.⁶⁵⁵

In considering how ICTs act as apparatuses for extraction, we can look to both their production and consumption and find that while a minority of the global workforce 'produces' technological goods, their use in other types of labour, and in a personal capacity, is becoming increasingly global. As Trevor Scholz reminds us, 5 billion people worldwide now have mobile phones and Facebook is now available on mobile phones in Africa.⁶⁵⁶ Approached simply from a commodity and consumption perspective the 'digital revolution' can be seen as just the latest step in high-end commodities, but there is something inherently more pervasive about the Internet and the smart phone, than, for example, household appliances. There is, as Jodi Dean identifies in 'communicative capitalism' a real projected sense of 'digital democracy',⁶⁵⁷ of 'access to all', which is not reflected in the ownership of other household appliances or global living standards. In these terms Ursula Huws identifies the home computer as having an ambiguous role in contemporary labour conditions, it being both 'an instrument of production and reproduction.'⁶⁵⁸ And therefore because 'information and communication technologies play a pivotal role in blurring the boundaries between work and consumption...between server and served...paid or unpaid',⁶⁵⁹ we must consider how such technologies play a role in real subsumption. Crary explains that 'in-use devices and apparatuses have an impact on small-scale forms of sociality (a meal, a conversation, or a classroom)', and consequently we 'passively and often voluntarily one now collaborates in one's own surveillance and data-mining'.⁶⁶⁰ In a similar vein, Fortunati explains that 'after the first wave of household appliances, technological innovation on the

⁶⁵⁵ This is why critics of immaterial labour and cognitive capitalism reiterate the intensification of material based economies globally, see Toscano (2009) and Caffentzis (2013).

⁶⁵⁶ Scholz (2013)

⁶⁵⁷ Dean (2005)

⁶⁵⁸ Huws (2001:16)

⁶⁵⁹ Huws (2001)

⁶⁶⁰ Crary (2013: 31:48)

material domestic labour front has come to a halt',⁶⁶¹ but the 'dematerialisation of reproductive labour' and the 'machinization of immaterial labour' through the introduction of ICTs into the home now function in place of the human body to educate, communicate and inform.⁶⁶²

The result is that the use of these intellective machines as life-denying technological systems has in fact led to not only lengthening and intensification of immaterial domestic labour but also the 'dematerialisation of the real' and, more exactly to its 'theft'.⁶⁶³

The information system Persochip in *Private Life* acts as both machine for personal labour, and for work.⁶⁶⁴ Terranova's writing on 'free labour' and the internet identifies how much of the labour which initially built the internet and maintains it is effectively unpaid: 'Free labour is the moment where this knowledgeable (that generated through post-Fordist modes of production) consumption of culture is translated into excess productive activities that are pleurably embraced and at the same time often shamelessly exploited.'⁶⁶⁵



Fig 46. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

⁶⁶¹ Fortunati (2007: 150)

⁶⁶² Fortunati (2007:147)

⁶⁶³ Ibid (151)

⁶⁶⁴ For example see this paper for a discussion around the types of 'dark' and unseen labour that exist on the peripheries of the web: http://www.wired.com/2014/10/content-moderation/?mbid=social_fb.

⁶⁶⁵ Terranova (2004:78)

This exploitation of 'free labour' has been developed and extended in the writing of Andrew Ross who identifies that digital labour 'is done either by users who do not perceive their interactive input as work at all, or else it is contracted out online – through a growing number of e-lance service sites – to a multitude of 'taskers' who piece together lumps of income from motley sources.'⁶⁶⁶ Consequently cost saving is achieved by dispersion employing 'the latent talent of the crowd, or the microdivision of labour into puzzles, stints, chores and bits'. This coupled with what Ross identifies as 'self-exploitation' in digital labour means that not only is digital labour hard to identify as labour but it is hard to understand the mechanism of exploitation behind it. Some have argued in fact whether it is indeed exploitation⁶⁶⁷ in a classic sense. Yet ideas of 'prosumption'⁶⁶⁸ and 'audience commodity'⁶⁶⁹ locate the axis of exploitation in labour which is perceived as entertainment or 'playbour', duping the participant into unknowingly 'labouring' for corporate social media and sales platforms, such as Amazon, which rely on customer reviews.⁶⁷⁰ A large part of this argument is made up of the greater access that Internet based corporations like Google and Amazon have on our lives and daily activities, evidenced in Figure 45, where the manager is caught 'working' in his virtual free time. They aim to mine data, or what is called 'big data' from all of our browsing preferences and online activity, consumption habits and leisure choices. Crowdsourcing or other forms like crowdfunding also work to outsource labour and production costs out to the population, Ross argues that what is unique about crowdsourcing is that it is often presented as something professionals would want to do in their spare time and is rarely paid.

The commodification of social media and many online platforms and blog media sites, such as the Huffington Post, is reflective of the Internet as a

⁶⁶⁶ Ross (2013:20)

⁶⁶⁷ See David Hesmondhalgh (2010) for a critique of online exploitation, where he makes a connection between all activities outside of the working day as potentially exploitative when taking the 'free labour' model. However I tend to disagree with Hesmondhalgh's argument, as while, yes we need to be careful about the question of labour and exploitation when using a Marxist model. The difference between a kids football coach who volunteers and Facebook is that no profit is produced by the football team and these activities happens outside of the commodity exchange relationship.

⁶⁶⁸ Alvin Toffler (1984)

⁶⁶⁹ Dallas Smythe's (2001) concept of 'audience commodity'.

⁶⁷⁰ Ross (2013) discussion on Amazons use of Mechanical Turk.

virtual market place. Where, on the one hand 'space' is rented to companies for advertisements, and, on the other hand, users are sold as commodities, or at least as holding potential value to companies as consumers. Christian Fuchs uses Facebook as an example of how crowdsourcing provides a model of total exploitation or 'free labour':

At the level of values, we can say that the collective Facebook worker works almost 64 billion hours per year...Infinite exploitation of the users (=no wage) allowed Facebook a profit rate of <50% in 2011. The secret of Facebook's profits is that it mobilises billions of hours of users' work time...that is unpaid.⁶⁷¹

What has not been addressed in terms of the 'free labour' argument (and an idea I explored in Chapter Two) was if these people are labouring for free how are they making the money to live? The answer given, is often that those with the 'time' to give to the Internet, are either, able to make a living from other paid labour, or from debt, or family remittances. So as I also explained in Chapter Two, while value may not be directly created on Facebook through exploitation it has simply displaced how value, in terms of a 'living wage', is distributed and what this living wage is spent on. Fuchs posits the argument of 'free labour' for Facebook, as exploitation in line with Marx's idea of labour-power as abstract labour. He justifies this move (away from the wage-relation) by Marx's concept of the 'falling rate of profit' and situates this form of exploitation as some theorists of post-Operaismo have, as part of the 'general intellect where 'human subjectivity and human sociality is put to use for capital accumulation.'⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ Fuchs (2014:107)

⁶⁷² Fuchs (2014:257)



Fig 47. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

While I do find Fuchs' theory compelling, it still does not really answer the question of value, as value is still essentially being created 'by the workers who produce commodities that are advertised on these sites, not the labour of the people who use these sites.'⁶⁷³ However companies who produce commodities do require consumers, which brings me back again to the question of how those involved in this 'free labour' afford to consume the products needed to engage in this labour. The answer for large segments of those in the global North is credit. There are continual references to credit and debt throughout the trilogy, but the equivalence becomes more abstracted in *Private Life*, in Figure 47 we see the manager contemplate the equivalence of his time with the instrument which enables his transition to virtual space.

This re-engages a question, which Harvey, amongst others, has continued to dwell on, being that there are spheres in capitalism other than production, which create value, like rent and the commodification of social reproduction,⁶⁷⁴ and what he describes as accumulation by dispossession.⁶⁷⁵ Steffen Böhm and Chris Land use Vercellone's theory of the 'becoming rent

⁶⁷³ Huws (2014: 89)

⁶⁷⁴ See Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion around domestic labour and capitalism.

⁶⁷⁵ Harvey (2003)

for profit⁶⁷⁶ to explain what they see as Facebook's hidden value.⁶⁷⁷ Facebook acts as a media space, much like a paper, and companies rent space on the platform. Not only do companies rent this space, but consumers rent access to use certain sites, like dating sites or selling venues like Ebay. However the relationship is more complex once we consider the free labour and free resources that are given up or appropriated on the Internet. This is where Bohn and Land employ Marx's ideas of primitive accumulation. While no violence is used in appropriating and selling someone's data, there is an analogous relationship between this and the taking of 'free' land or the commodification of the commons. We must acknowledge that in terms of profit, users, audiences and consumers for social media and the Internet become a resource, a 'raw material', as Göran Bolin⁶⁷⁸ has suggested. Mark Andrejevic explains, regarding the website YouTube, that while exploitation, in terms of Marx's formula for surplus extraction and the means of production, is not strictly applicable to YouTube, we could use the idea of estrangement or alienation in terms of the privately owned nature of YouTube.⁶⁷⁹ Consequently:

the ability to create, view and share user-created video is accompanied by the extraction of use-generated data. This data is captured in order to be returned to its producers in the form of external influence: the congealed result of their own activity used to channel their behaviour and induce their desires...⁶⁸⁰

Therefore users' labour may not be creating value but their data and activities do in turn create value at points further up or down the value chain. Within this line of argument we could, however, posit that anything, any thought, action or object can at some point create value in the context of labour up and down the value chain. But there is an aspect in the totalizing power of social media and browsers like Google that doesn't simply appropriate an

⁶⁷⁶ Vercellone (2010)

⁶⁷⁷ Bohn and Land (2012)

⁶⁷⁸ Bolin (2010)

⁶⁷⁹ Andrejevic (2009)

⁶⁸⁰ Andrejevic (2009:421)

idea, or object, but envelopes lived experience,⁶⁸¹ both in advance of and after the event.

Here we are talking about the transformation to real subsumption through the mechanisation of all-life.⁶⁸² This brings us to the question of ICTs and their role as contributing to relative surplus extraction and thus real subsumption. ICTs influence the way labour power can be harnessed because they collapse time and global space, meaning that labour can continue throughout the 24-hour cycle, and they also allow the super acceleration of circulation in finance capital. The pervasiveness of the computer, and computer-based systems of information and communication can be read as a direct example of relative surplus extraction, as while many industrial processes are still increasingly mechanised, removing labour at some sites (let us consider car production), what I find increasingly interesting is the way that, as Fortunati has identified, many immaterial jobs have become computerised, and thus reflect the further integration of labour within the means of production. For example, let us consider call centres, banks, many social services which are accessed only by an automated message system, self-check-outs, and this is without mentioning the huge number of mobile phone apps that now govern every part of our lives. Certainly in terms of financial capitalism, and 'communicative capitalism' and their relationship with algorithmic data, we can see an example of Marx's description of real subsumption through the integration of knowledge and labour into the very machine.

However, as Vercellone has argued, ironically ICTs function to permit either a return to formal subsumption thorough the extraction of time outside of the wage and people as data – as capital 'simply takes hold of it',⁶⁸³ or what has been called hybrid subsumption.⁶⁸⁴ Hybrid subsumption is an appropriate model for many creative types of labour, because a freelancer operates as

⁶⁸¹ See Manovich's (2013) book *Software Takes Command* where he examines the totality of software in terms of experience and aesthetics.

⁶⁸² I do not have space to properly explore the ideas around formal and real subsumption here, but they do provide an important backdrop to this chapter and indeed the thesis. As it is the movement between the two forms, which is of interest, and the way that each form corresponds to different forms of extraction. For a further exploration of these idea see Marx and Endnotes # 2, Vercellone (2006), and Murray (2004).

⁶⁸³ Endnotes # 2 (2010)

⁶⁸⁴ Murray (2004), and it is also important to note that Marx (1976) spoke about Hybrid subsumption also, as the period between different forms of the mode of production.

both within the mode of production, as they work for a corporation, but their skills are still in many ways their own, and often their equipment is their own too, which is not too dissimilar to pre-capitalist artisanal labour. However, as Patrick Murray rightly points out, real subsumption always precedes formal subsumption, as in order for capital to 'expand' it must have the mechanisms of 'real' subsumption in place to expand and impose the mechanisms of formal subsumption.⁶⁸⁵ For example, the systems for mechanised industrial labour were only able to be replicated in the colonies, where they could also draw on existing 'slave labour' because such a system, and thus model, existed in the first place. The labour was initially formally subsumed, and then through technical and social transformation it was then really subsumed. This concept is important for thinking about globalisation in terms of differing temporalities and the way that capital exploits using both forms of subsumption. What we can identify with the increasing totality of ICTs, is both, the further extension of relative surplus value on the working day and the extension of this 'technique' into the personal lives of those who use them, as a reconfiguration of the subject (Figure 48). In *Private Life* the way in which the manager's life experience is slowly replaced by the private data of Persochip is a way of confronting this issue.

⁶⁸⁵ Murray (2004)



Fig 48. Video Still *Private Life* (2014)

However ICTs and software, especially of the ‘personal’ kind, ironically do give the illusion that we in fact are not ‘subsumed’ by the mechanisms of relative surplus value, given that they provide us ‘freedom’, the freedom to work whenever we want and be online at any time or communicate with our family. Accordingly, we must continue to look at all of time/life networks not just in terms of waged and unwaged labour, but in terms of commodified and non-commodified experience. If people are spending their ‘free’ time producing content for a corporation, albeit a by-product of ‘fun’, then this is something that should concern materialists and Marxists alike.⁶⁸⁶ As the lines which demarcate work and life blur, we do not just see the direct extension of the working day – into non-working time, we see that the conditions of work themselves are further strained as value is produced outside of the wage relationship. Let us take for example Marx’s concept of the surplus labouring population, and the ideas I explored in the first Chapter concerning the international division of labour. As labour is out-sourced globally, or even nationally jobs become fewer and you have an increasing reserve army of labour. If the same conditions are created by the development of extractive

⁶⁸⁶ I do take note here of Huws’ (2014) assertion that identifying productive labour as the site for resistance still remains important, even when we face the further blurring of production/reproduction. It is perhaps the successful avoidance of the realities of productive labour in the global North, which has led many theorists to ignore such spaces for production as a valid site for resistance.

processes, which feed on labour outside of the working day – for example Facebook – we have an internally created deficit of jobs. Ironically, this is exactly the situation described by Marx with regards to the falling rate of profit, but again this does not mean these changes should be accepted as another noose which capitalism will hang itself with. As Andrew Ross explains:

It would be naive however to conclude, as some advocates of immaterial labour do, that capital has been weakened or outsmarted by the need to forage far and wide, and on especially uncertain and hostile terrain, for cognitive inputs and surpluses. The evidence from the current rent-extraction boom is that profits from new markets are far from soft, whether for jumbo monopolist like Google...or for the army of smaller content aggregators...their business models are highly quantitative and are precisely tied to measureable value...it is by no means clear that the increasingly sophisticated Internet metrics industry represents a significant departure from the gainful calculus of the labour theory of value⁶⁸⁷

The immediate truths of this restructuring are here now. They have splintered work place solidarity and subverted reproductive time, which can be a source of class solidarity through communal activities outside of the wage relationship. If all of our time is spent on corporate 'commons', dissent becomes packaged and monitored and rebranded as a commodity. This combined with current government-led Internet surveillance activities (corporate algorithms that capture all of online activity and inbuilt tracking devices distributed globally in the mobile phone), has meant that not only is the web a questionable place for dissent and the organisation of protest, but it leads us to ask if part of the 'capturing' is about the capture of information which will inform 'future proofing' against resistance to capital.

Throughout this Chapter I have reflected on the specific condition of 'work' in the contemporary global North. I have used this condition to consider how this situation affects what is considered 'creative' or artistic work, and the points at which it is increasingly mechanised, controlled, digitised, and subjectivised. I have reasserted the importance of digital extraction as a

⁶⁸⁷ Ross (2013:25)

global condition, which begins in mines in the global South and ends in your palm as you access an app on your iphone that ensures you are being 'productive' enough. It is subsequently important to understand that the process of real subsumption is as much about the social, and thus subjective condition of working in the contemporary working day, as it is about hi-tech equipment. In many ways the subject has more value in the global North, than their 'mindless' working body. For this reason the video *Private Life* is predominantly concerned with the social aspects of work, or the working aspects of the social. This brings me back to what I have identified as the endless working day, a day that currently blurs the lines between work and life in the interest of transforming all of life into a value producing activity. What then could constitute resistance to such all-encompassing logic? In *Private Life* I offered a virus, but as I explain above the idea of computer based resistance, is that such events are increasingly supervised because the means of production on the web is exclusively privatised, and incidentally if we are talking about a blurring between work and life how do we 'strike' or sabotage our own lives in the act of resistance? This model of behaviour has been trialled in some ways by the artist, through the sacrifice of their 'life' for their art, but how this could be further developed leaves further questions and research regarding the points at which global capital is weakest.

CONCLUSION

I recently had a conversation with an artist in residence from the Gujarat region of India. He explained that mural painting formed one component of the art school curriculum, where he taught, and artists were often paid to paint frescos and murals on both public and corporate buildings. This made me consider the space I was in at the time, a University Union building. The only forms that surrounded me were the designed logos of multinational companies and the images of a 'branded' University. This conversation, I admit, momentarily led me to become ensconced with a romantic idea of art, and craft, which is addressed in *Synophresia Nervosa*, where artists in many ways become an appendage to the state or constitute the culture industry. However, after this lapse, I began to consider the way the aesthetics of space, and the aesthetic of the built environment, are representative of the totalising reach of an aesthetics of neoliberalism. The 'democratisation' of art, of images, and of 'beauty' is in many ways a reality with the Internet. But, does the 'communal' space of the Internet provide a distraction, while the places we live, work, and play are transformed, gentrified, privatised and sanitised? As I explain in Chapter Three this same process is now taking place in the digital 'commons'.

Having recently witnessed the 'regeneration' of two neighbourhoods I previously resided in – the riverside in Hammersmith and the railway arches in Brixton, I have seen first-hand what this aesthetic transformation does. These are just two small examples of ongoing gentrification in London, but represent the wider destruction of genuine and 'organic' community spaces through the processes of ongoing 'enclosures' described by the Midnight Notes Collective.⁶⁸⁸ Although ideas around gentrification are not central to my thesis, I reflect on them now, because I see this process as the extraction of community space, transformed into a site of profit, whether it is real estate, a Starbucks, or shop fronts. But the issue that I wanted to focus on here, and one which is more pertinent to my research, was the aesthetic transformation. This 'transformation', reflected by the destruction of the

⁶⁸⁸ <http://www.midnightnotes.org/index2.html>

Eduardo Paolozzi murals in Tottenham Court Rd station,⁶⁸⁹ is part of a process towards a totalising aesthetics of capitalism. Once a place has been 'regenerated' it takes on an aesthetic of corporate global capitalism – places where art, and craft no longer even reflect a tentative, or symbolic relationship between people and the state (as we saw with previous era's investment in public art). Jameson's evocation that economics under postmodernism has become cultural are pertinent here, but just as important is that his critique of the fragmentation of resistance through models of difference celebrated under the postmodern, has itself been usurped by their homogenisation and the unified image of corporate global capitalism.⁶⁹⁰ Does this mean we are moving to a non-aesthetic epoch? While the artist in residence described painting a mural for Samsung, he also described the decoration of his University by the students. This made me realise how aesthetics are tightly controlled by capital, as space is increasingly transformed through the only modus operandi of capital – profit. The image is extracted, sanitised, quantified and then inserted back into circulation. The aesthetic of profit is dull and bland; it's like a modern pop song, drained of all substance. If I am to understand an aesthetics of extraction, part of this process is the very process of extracting or removing the aesthetic from the equation, and surely then understanding the aesthetic of non-aesthetics.

In undertaking this research, I initially wanted to forge connections between my own labour as a cultural producer and the different types of cultural labour globally. I made artwork analogous with tourist art, which illuminated the destructive processes of ideology, which is accumulated in the cultural object. There is, however, for me, something very important at stake in both vanquishing and restoring the art object and indeed the aesthetic form of the political or the political form of the aesthetic. So the place of cultural labour and the cultural object still runs deep throughout the video trilogy. What, however, became more important than the place of the cultural object in the research is the place of art production as a discursive form. Yet it is the meta-

⁶⁸⁹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/eduardo-paolozzis-muchloved-murals-at-tottenham-court-road-tube-station-under-threat-from-400m-crossrail-redevelopment-9993662.html>

⁶⁹⁰ Jameson (1998)

concept of *extraction* that allows me to tie together disparate threads providing a central locus that can engage a cultural and artistic critique. Extraction as both theory and method allows me to engage with political economic theory in an 'artistic', mimetic and, performative way. The research does not merely plot the new and old trajectories of extraction, but seeks to interrogate the place of art and cultural production in post-Fordist capitalism. I proposed and considered many readings of when and where a surplus, or understood in much wider terms, as either the general intellect or the commons, is being extracted. Therefore I found it necessary to create a collection or taxonomy of 'extractions'. Previously my working methods were about 'taking stock' or compiling ideas to form a unified, even if monstrous whole. This compulsion led me to map out the multiple ways that extraction functions, as both, an out-in and in-out process under capitalism. However in creating a collection there must be a reason or system for the inclusion or exclusion of certain items, and the process of editing and indeed compiling was integral to the research. When I write about 'cut and paste', 'montage', and appropriation, it is because I strongly believe these methods post-postmodernism continue to be appropriate to both mimic and interrogate capital and the modes of extraction more effectively than a theoretical analysis alone. They are forms of knowledge production, which can feed into theoretical understandings, but exist as artistic knowledge and cultural knowledge in their own right. But they are consciously coupled with specifically modern forms of cultural technique, such as the utopian impulse, parody, narrative, and the very idea of the artist making an original contribution, or having authorship by the production of work.

As a cultural producer, I must continually interrogate both the methods and forms of production I use. This led me to ask; do I need to conform, or am I conforming, to an aesthetics of capitalism? At the same time, one must ask what is this 'aesthetics of capitalism' and does it really exist? Is not the strength of capitalism that it can enclose myriad forms into the abstraction of the exchange relation? As I explain, with reference to the use of *détournement* in contemporary video practice, how can we be sure that the

re-appropriation of images of capital (as we see in the work of Superflex and Liam Gillick) is going to subvert the aesthetic domination of the images of capitalism and resist the symbolic order of capitalism itself, especially if these images have already been appropriated by capital in the first place? I am fully aware that capitalism can now appropriate anything from anywhere, and always strives to be one step ahead of what is 'cool' (for instance, consider Karl Lagerfeld's 2014 runway show that directly appropriated 'protest' and 'feminism' as aesthetic form). But equally to give up, to deny the existence of the image, or the role that aesthetic dialogue has on our lives and the sensorial experiences we have, is far more problematic than to continue to invest in understanding the role aesthetics can play in politics. My preoccupation with an aesthetics of resistance in non-Western, indigenous and alterior cultural practices, is in many ways a strategy to avoid the representation of an aesthetics of neoliberalism. This, I know, is fraught with problems of its own, in terms of appropriation and ideas of the 'exotic', and a romantic return to pre-capitalist exchange, but this fear must be worked through in the production of artwork, which draws on the power of form to overcome capital. The revolution may not appear like the past, but the past can provide inspiration in creating a new aesthetic order to resist capital with. Through exploring what an aesthetics of extraction is, or can be, I have isolated spheres which are in many ways 'close to the bone', where what we are addressing is a grey area in terms of whether it is a product of capitalism, or a result of a resistance to capitalism's totalising form. In employing both side-by-side, I am able to understand the relationship between the two. As I explain in the Introduction, extraction is about destruction and confiscation, but it is also about tearing away from the whole in order to form something new.

In conclusion I want to ask: what are the aesthetics of extraction? How have I resolved this question throughout the thesis and does this notion feed into wider economic, social and political critiques of extraction? Throughout the thesis and the videos an aesthetic of extraction is both a conceptual process and formal image. Here we must consider the movement of Capitalist

Realism, and the work of K.P Brehmer, as he tried to understand the aesthetics of capitalism, not just in the images of capital that he saw around him, (advertising, the stock market and globalisation) but the interpretation of a mathematical, or economic concept as image or form. It must be asserted that the research has attempted to do the same with the idea of extraction, transforming it from an economic concept into an aesthetic form, and thereby understanding it as lived process. I want to confirm that extraction has an aesthetic form and it is this form that in many ways assists the action of extraction, whether the form disguises the act of extraction, normalising it, so we don't even notice it any more (as I explained in Chapter Three with the digital interface). Or let us say with the logic of 'austerity' or debt guilt, it functions as a moralising image to enforce fear or guilt onto those who are being subject to further extraction? Or, finally, as I discussed in Chapter Two, is it ultimately embodied in the very idea of an individual consciousness, the thought of an individual?

In the first Chapter I examine extraction in relation to primitive accumulation and global development, and then subsequently in relation to the social artwork, or artwork which employs the global South or global development as form. These aesthetics of extraction are able to function through a dialectical process that moves between invisibility and visibility. Where, on the one hand, exploitative processes of capital in the global South are covered up and made invisible, and on the other, images of poverty and suffering are used to support rhetorics of development, acting as an extractive regime in themselves, and then finally redeployed as content and form by artists. The concept of appropriation by altruism, and the aesthetic of altruism, enabled me to understand the many-layered problems within the social artwork. And as Dimitrakaki explains, the image of labour in the global South comes full circle when shown in Western galleries.⁶⁹¹ I would also argue it comes full circle in terms of the gallery space, which exists now (sadly often, but not exclusively) as a neoliberal form, which transforms and castrates the original action of the artist.

⁶⁹¹ Dimitrakaki (2013)

Altruism is often mistakenly understood as representative of collaboration or community in many social artwork projects. The aesthetic form that the 'social engagement' takes is often not fully considered: the project space, the gallery, and the project itself, are transformed into an apparatus of extraction. Through the agenda of extracting meaning from a social engagement, we lose 'real' engagement, because the relationship is scarred by the class relation between those who are being 'helped' and the 'helpers'. Thus *Keela Mine* directly employed this language of altruism by appropriating signs, objects, and performances from global development imagery and the social artwork. *Keela Mine* physically situates the cultural producer within the web of debt, primitive accumulation and colonialism, but it is equally constructed with reference to an idea of permanent revolution, as both a political and aesthetic strategy against capitalism. Accepting that capitalism is not necessary for the transition to communism, I am able to embrace non-Western cultural forms as representative of a new aesthetic alternative. However, as with all of the videos this transitory moment of 'existing outside' is never fully realised, as even the bodies of the Keela become digested in new regimes of extraction. Only the singular act of terror is wielded as a last resort, as Zeel blows up the extraction van.

Synophresia Nervosa moves from the impotent and extracted bodies of the Keela, to the metaphysical, the immaterial, the realm of the mind and ideas. It investigates the creation and subsumption of originality, asking, what is extracted in the action of 'creative extraction' and what is at stake by questioning the nature of originality and ideas. The role of the artist as both misplaced, and 'out of time', perhaps even antiquated – with her ideas of romantic individuality – punctuates the trilogy. However, I do believe artists are in a unique position to make explanatory and even revolutionary statements that can draw on a wide variety of theoretical concepts and methods. There are very few disciplines where this is effectively possible, but the artist can be truly interdisciplinary. If this is still possible, Chapter Two became a process of understanding how the artist can function despite the stated limitations of art and being an artist. How are we to understand

extraction in the context of cultural production itself, in the action of making art, or conversely the act of creativity embodied in the act of extraction? To understand and answer this question, Sohn-Rethel's writing on the exchange-abstraction⁶⁹² is important, as it allowed me to understand the historical relationship between the birth of capitalism and the birth of art,⁶⁹³ not just in terms of Adorno and Bürger's contributions,⁶⁹⁴ but in relation to the way that the concept of an individual consciousness is intrinsically tied to capitalism. If this is the case, then the act of extracting surplus value already mimics the moment of separation embodied in the idea of the individual. Of course, such a preposition does not allow much movement in terms of resistance, but what it did allow me to identify was that this process of abstraction was taking place in the very production of the individual artwork. This led me to consider the process of social reproduction, as a sphere previously outside of the exchange-abstraction, which has become, in many ways, a new 'model' for the production of art. Is this due to the encroaching reach of the commodification of social reproduction, or is it an intentional process of re-skilling in terms of form and technique, which bypasses the domination of the exchange-abstraction? Does it function in a similar way that Roberts explains Duchamp's readymades do, by re-skilling artistic labour as industrial labour?⁶⁹⁵ But in this case we re-skill artistic labour as reproductive labour.

However in looking at the 'transformations' of artistic labour, I was made aware that the subjectivity of the artist has been used itself to transform many other types of labour in a direct reversal. The artist embodies the idea of the subjectification of work, and as Berardi explains 'capital was able to renew its psychic, ideological and economic energy, specifically thanks to the absorption of creativity.'⁶⁹⁶ This idea of self-sacrifice and 'creativity' as model for other types of labour has now called into question the efficacy of these

⁶⁹² Sohn-Rethel (1978)

⁶⁹³ I have not referred in the thesis, to either Kant or Hegel's original contributions on the emergence of aesthetics as a separate field, because this would warrant further research, and investigation, of which, unfortunately I do not have room to do so here. I do consider Kant's aesthetic critique in relation to Marx in Wayne's (2014) writing on 'Red Kant'.

⁶⁹⁴ Bürger (1984) Adorno (2002)

⁶⁹⁵ Roberts (2008)

⁶⁹⁶ Berardi (2007:96)

practices within artistic production. This now means that if labour is transformed, then the modes of extraction too must be transformed. Consequently, artists should in many ways be cautious of how they ‘appropriate’ from the sphere of social reproduction or the non-commoditised. In considering this cycle of appropriation and subsumption, all actions in *Synophresia Nervosa* were in constant flux between the productive and the reproductive. This conflict is only navigated by the transformation of the appendage of work – the hand, being turned into a work of art via the act of reproduction. This polemic is, in many ways, articulated by socially engaged art with intended ‘useful’ social outcomes. Yet, what this dialogue illuminates, is the idea that the artist, as Adorno⁶⁹⁷ and Roberts⁶⁹⁸ have explained, is often caught *between*. Artists are caught between: commodified and autonomous labour, between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and in working for free they embody the costs of reproduction, and in fact the costs of this ‘autonomous’ labour themselves. Through developing the concept of the ‘ideas lab’ and the condition synophresia nervosa, I am creating specific phenomena, which can embody these contradictions. I understand that the ‘creative’ extraction, that takes place in the ideas lab, is representative of a much wider extraction of the subject, or of the commons, initially theorised by Marx in the general intellect. What I attempt to do in *Synophresia Nervosa* is set up a contradictory scenario, where ideas can be ‘harvested’, and then negate such an idea by the inference that ideas have no meaning outside of the exchange-abstraction and abstract labour and cannot in themselves exist as free floating entities. This is to, on the one hand, identify the ‘un-extractable’ nature of an idea, and on the other, to advocate the potency latent in individual thought, which transformed into a collective body of knowledge, can actively resist the act of extraction.

Private Life (2014) ‘houses’ the many facets of cultural production and contemporary labour, acting as an umbrella for the major concepts addressed throughout the research. The ‘manager’ character in *Private Life* and his ensemble are a conduit for all the forms of labour and social roles

⁶⁹⁷ Adorno (2002)

⁶⁹⁸ Roberts (2015b)

that the contemporary cultural worker has to adopt: project manager, social facilitator, studio artist, entrepreneur, avatar, creative unemployed, lumpenproletarian and precarious worker. Extraction is understood in relation to both absolute and relative surplus value in Chapter Three, and therefore is understood as temporal or technological. The temporal and the technological are integral to the aesthetic format of film, and indeed video. Films which document the 'real time' of labour, or even experience, such as Andy Warhol's duration films (most notably *Eat*, 1963), attempt to construct an aesthetics of absolute surplus value. More recently, the videos of Hito Steyerl and Melanie Gilligan animate an aesthetic of relative surplus value through their engagement with and deconstruction of digital technology. The objective of *Private Life* was to illuminate the link, not only between absolute and relative surplus value, but between material, or more specifically industrial and resource labour, and immaterial or digital labour. In doing so, I choose not to focus on 'the worker' and their contradicted state between work and life, but a manager. This is because I want a way of discussing the way power and control is now embodied in the worker – through the subjectification, or internalisation of control. In choosing to focus on a manager, I could reflect on the aesthetics of management or bureaucracy, as an aesthetics of extraction, and also understand this process as internal to the manager's cognitive process. The way the manager's ability to think and remember is directly affected by the system Persochip is intended to reflect on the way the digital algorithm has dramatically changed our cognitive skills. Through the development of clever algorithms we self-extract, self-manage and labour for free, all in a private domain, which speaks of 'unlimited freedoms'. There is, however, a moment of redemption, or a reprieve from this system in *Private Life*. The virus, masquerading as a bygone miner, who cuts through the layers of deceit, represents the aesthetic of resistance against the totalising power of digital capitalism. Why does the labour of a miner return to smash the future? This is because it presents both a historical cycle between the beginning of capitalism and now, and it takes on the aesthetic form of the labour theory of value, refusing to be silenced.

Contribution to Knowledge

In contextualising both the writing and the video trilogy, I am inspired by the small number of contemporary practitioners who use theory and politics as the basis for their work. The videos as cultural artefacts contribute directly to this wider artistic field of knowledge. But at the same time I feel that there are still many missing links between theory and practice. This may be because of the continued 'investment' in object making supported by the ongoing dry-goods market, and as I explain in Chapter Two the need of artists to 'get paid'. But there are also divisions between art practice and theoretical research, which tend to be addressed as separate domains by academia. The artist-writer therefore occupies a unique position, as someone who makes cultural artefacts and then is able to critique them. This is crucial for the further development of the visual arts within academia. It is here that I situate this research, as a genuinely hybrid project. I wanted those viewing the videos to be suspended between disciplines – to identify both artistic clichés and moments of difficult originality. The research is heavily invested in the nuts and bolts of making, and equally engaged with theoretical questions within political economic discourse. I would not have been able to produce the trilogy without conducting a review of such a wide range of literature, and its subsequent application through the writing. At the same time I do not feel I would be able to combine such a disparate set of works under the same rubric, if I were approaching them from a literary or historical, or social science position. Through this process of artistic research I am able to conceptualise extraction as an overarching concept that can take stock of the expanding multiplicities of exploitation, especially in relation to culture and cultural production. Indeed, extraction was only revealed in its entirety as a concept through the production of the videos. It is at these moments of creative production that theory became manifest in the objects and actions. By transmuting a theoretical idea into an action or process I am able to understand the way such a complex, but yet entirely simple impulse can permeate into all-life. It is the objective of the research to identify and isolate these multiple sites and systems of extraction.

In terms of a Marxist definition of surplus extraction, many of the forms I address are not strictly part of the wage and productive process. However, I believe, along with theorists in the Autonomist field, that the diversification of forms of exploitation, through changes in technology, imperialism, globalisation, production, and reproduction means that we urgently require an expanded concept of extraction. This expansive concept of extraction is also necessary to both enact the act of extraction in the artistic artefact, but also to establish an aesthetic or artistic critique. Transforming theory or politics into a visual or performative artefact, or the reverse (espousing art as theory) is a process fraught with problems. Yet, because of its polemic potentialities, when it is done successfully artistic practice stands apart as something transformative. As such art stands 'in-between', it becomes at once both very specific and historical and entirely atemporal. As Sami Khatib explains with regard to Benjamin⁶⁹⁹ the revolutionary exists within the very process of capitalist production yet runs non-concurrently. I am able to achieve this by creating a narrative in the trilogy which enacts this process of existing alongside capital, but moving in another direction, or on an alternative plane. Through the processes of textual and practical research I have grown closer to enacting this methodology. This functions by engaging 'real life' and its critique into a new matrix that allows for a simultaneous engagement with and a disavowal of social and historical regimes. It uses capitalism in homeopathic doses to re-infect culture with a more virulent resistance. It is the production of this hybrid knowledge, which has allowed me to understand, theorise and perform extraction in myriad ways, which contributes to the collective knowledge that seeks to understand and undermine the dominant structures of capital. In terms of the videos as artworks, I must consider two aspects: firstly how the videos contribute to the field of artist-video as specific knowledge production? And secondly: how do they avoid this process of commodification which takes place in the process of exchange, set about in such spaces as the gallery? It is something I very much contemplated early on, and it was part of the dialogue around socially engaged art that led me away from showing the videos in relation to the

⁶⁹⁹ Khatib (2010)

'subjects' I was engaging with. In saying this, I see them as a serial, as on-going, and in many ways more in line with a Science Fiction television show than experimental film or video-art. It is for this reason, that like Melanie Gilligan's *Popular Unrest*, I will work towards developing a website for showing the work. Here the work avoids the relationship with the gallery and engages with a truly global and 'free' distribution. Of course this makes assumptions about the 'free' nature of the Internet, and indeed digital labour, but in avoiding the scopic commodification, or elitist space of the gallery, I want to assure that the critiques established in the work, are not directly subsumed back into circulation.

A Consideration of Research Questions and Outcomes

The process of identifying spheres of extraction became a process of following capital as it expands and retracts. In doing so I am able to elucidate that fact that many of the ways capital has extended its mechanisms of extraction is through our subjectivity, and through the re-enactment of life and labour by us as the integrated subjects of capital. This however led me back to a very problematic stagnancy: that of 'nothing outside of capitalism'. Yet what I hope I have reasserted is that there have been and remain many spheres outside of capital, which need defending and protecting. The concept of commodification therefore became a new/old tool to examine some of these new extractive processes, especially in light of changes to the commodification of social reproduction through technology and relative surplus value. I was also able to address the very substance that is extracted – value – that calls into question the nature of value itself. What is 'valued' by capitalism, and how do the mechanisms of extraction transform with changes value? An example of this is mineral extraction – mines in Africa that have been closed for years are now being reopened by Chinese mining companies – or the fluctuations of crude oil prices which extend or retract prospecting. In this, we see the shift from mineral-values and land values to labour-values and production-values. The same questions can also be asked of ideas: at what point does an idea contain value? This led me to consider the value of what was being produced. Is it an individual or private consciousness, or

indeed, the creation of a body of work that re-engages the process of extraction in the 'social artwork' or the *modus operandi* of 'originality'? In many ways, up and down the value chains, what is being extracted is the ability to exist autonomously. In each sphere we identify the 'costs' as the loss of some right or claim to autonomy, the right to clean arable land, the right to think in spite of the market or notions of a private consciousness, and the right to exist in a sphere, which is not commoditised. In identifying each of these *losses* throughout the trilogy I illuminate the ways in which extraction is mobilised through culture, also identifying the reverse: where mechanisms of extraction have become embodied as culture. The final episode in this chain of extractions could be 'self-extraction' which like self-management initiates the full subjectification of capital, and looks something like working for free, which artists ironically already do. The research in many ways has brought up more questions than it has provided answers, but in saying this, the questions it has generated have opened up new ways of understanding and new pathways for further research.

Future Ideas

The process of conducting the research has meant locating myself between theory and practice, trying to give them equal weighting, but doing so by transforming ideas through images and images through ideas. As such, I have created a highly specific research methodology and a particular way of making work, which has been incredibly rewarding, as it has allowed me to engage with disparate ways of thinking in a comprehensive body of work. The result is that the research has initiated a range of further questions – such as examining the dynamics of extraction in action through a body of ethnographic film work; a further investigation of the commodification of reproduction through its mechanisation; and a further analysis of the way mechanisms of extraction have become part of our psychology, and subsequently part of 'pre-formed' ideas or creativity. Through this I have also developed a new way of working, and a new style of artwork: a practice that can successfully draw on theory and ethnography to build visions of the past and future.

Future research will allow me to navigate the specificities of the three Chapters. Within the first Chapter there was a large body of research into global development, which I was unable to incorporate, most specifically research into the use of mobile phones and mobile banking in Africa. This is a very particular research project, which has been approached by a number of global development theorists, but not addressed from a cultural perspective. However because it includes so many tricky areas around 'progress' and 'opportunity' it needs to be addressed carefully and with nuance. The mobile phone as device for extraction is touched upon in *Keela Mine*, but by situating it within the global South as a specific object and image of capital, we can expose mechanisms of capture. This research I believe requires the depth of an ethnographic approach, engaging with 'real life' testimonies that map out the expansion of the mobile phone market in Africa. Part of understanding the way extraction differs in the global South was to understand the way resistance would also differ. This would lead to the further investigation of emerging aesthetics of resistance to global capitalism in the global South.

In the Second Chapter I only begin to unravel the role of ideas and originality in art and indeed their relationship to extraction. To understand the ways ideas are generated and the very nature of an individual idea and its relationship with ideas of private property, it would be necessary to further explore the relationship between the exchange-abstraction and consciousness. The final Chapter contains many pressing issues around the digital sphere, which are pertinent for art production and technique, but also for the 'human' condition, and considerations of the colonisation of the mind. This would warrant further research to situate where my specific critique would lie, as research in this area has proliferated of late. But the expansion and compression of time through personal media explored in *Private Life*, could be developed and expanded in a number of directions, taking stock of both the digital interface, which permeates both art-as-research and textual research in terms of its totalising aesthetic power and the privatisation of this space. Consequently, there must be an on-going consideration of the digital

outside of capital, and what forms this could take, if it is to be redeployed as resistive to capitalism.

To end, I would like to reconsider the video trilogy, and the initial reasoning for its creation. What inspired the production of the trilogy, was the simple idea of the way the action of creation/imagination, or in terms of Jameson's writing on Utopia, a 'dream for' a new world, a revolutionary moment, is in fact, the artist's defining 'contribution' to both political and aesthetic knowledge. Accordingly, The trilogy, fits within the impulse for utopia, characteristic of so many modernist works of art. However, it simultaneously occupies the sicklier and 'self-reflexive' state of the postmodern, or simply, failed modernity. Yet to understanding its contribution, or the way the trilogy functions, we can consider what Jameson writes in reference to Thomas Moore's original treatise on Utopia:

The Utopian thought experiment, then, which abruptly removes money from the field, brings an aesthetic relief that unexpectedly foregrounds all kinds of new individual, social and ontological relationships. It is as if suddenly the Utopian strategy had been transformed back into the Utopian impulse as such, unmasking the Utopian dimensions of a range of activities hitherto distorted and disguised by the abstraction of value.⁷⁰⁰

Here we can observe, the moment when the veil is lifted, or even less ceremonially, as, a shifted view. It is this 'shifted view' that the video trilogy provides, and, that which I will continue to work on. Further illuminating the complexities of extraction on both body and mind, in the hope that by 'removing it from the field' an entirely new set of 'individual, social, and ontological relationships' will be revealed.

⁷⁰⁰ Jameson (2007:230)

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APPENDIX

1)

Keela Mine

Synopsis:

Keela mine takes place in a fictional indigenous community; it is based around the character Chol, who has many debts he is paying back. It is set 'post-enterprise' and many of the schemes set up to 'develop' the Keela have failed and what remains are the debts and toxic ruination. Chol begins by speaking about his problems to his old friend Layet who has a more traditionalist view of the situation and warns him about his debts, Chol then spends time with his friend Pei who has already sold his organs to pay off his debts and advises Chol to do the same. Chol agonises over this decision and after seeing his radicalised sister he turns to the extraction vans to pay off his debts.

Characters:

Chol- main character who could be seen as lack lustre or an apathetic character, he has many debts from the enterprise years.

Layet- A traditionalist who maintains harvesting the cello tree to get by

Pei- a 'modern man' who has embraced selling his organs and using the money to buy new commodities

Zeel- Chol's sister who has been radicalised and sees terrorism as a way out of the Tem's oppression.

Script

Scene 1

Chol and Layet are harvesting some chelo trees, pulling out strands and untwisting them, leisurely and sitting on stools....they are chatting while working...they look bored rather than contented.

The scene begins slowly, with lots of gaps between dialogue, the action of unwinding is key to the flow of the scene..and the dialogue punctuates it...but towards the end becomes more animated and the discussion heats up..

Chol: "Pei got 20 RAM for his small globes last week- enough to feed and clothe him for months"

Layet: " (smurks) Did you see that scar?..... It looked festering to me...(pause and look up at the sky) Too hot for wounds like that"

Chol: “I was told the surgery was ‘non invasive’ – (laughs) guess thats why I am still here, harvesting, with you..”

(pause and continue to work on harvesting)

Layet: “How is the stall going?” (with keen interest)

Chol: “My stall?...Well let’s just say my only customer last week was Pei-. I wondered if it was only out of pity?”

Layet: “ You don’t need that deserter’s pity! (tuts..said with slight anger..pauses when she notices that Chol looks down) Yeah...what to do?..... Ever since the extraction clinics opened the tourists have just stopped coming”

Chol: (looking puzzled) “yeah...but.....surely the tourists want to see the extractions?.....maybe?”

Layet: “ yeah sure why not! And as the managers would say,(in mocking voice) you can make some souvenirs of the experience’

(laughter)

Chol: “exactly.....but you know without artisan status they only pay standard commodity price..... i have to charge by weight at my stall”

(pause continue working)

Chol: “I must have up to fifty microloans that need paying back..my only hope is that they go bust like the others”

Layet: “to think when i was a child we did not even know what that word debt meant!”

Layet: (said with trepidation) “So.....(said with trepidation) I hear Pei has started to accumulate?”

Chol: “ Yeah..... lots of them have....just small things, phones, clothing, satellites...but next...(looks slightly excited) it will be houses and land”

Layet: “ (Phew...)..come on!.... how many organs would you have to sell to buy your own land back! (smirks)”

Chol: “ would you even want to buy this land back?..... its dry now..... all we grow are Chelo trees.....why not buy somewhere else?”

Layet: “(agitated) You forget it wasn’t like this before the mining and the enterprise years....and don’t be down on Chelo trees, they are your livelihood. ...they are real.....(mumbles) better them than selling your body”

Chol: “(looks forlorn) “ Ah...(throws the strand he is working on down) Chelo seeds are bitter! You know they are!..... These trees haunt me in my sleep! we used to use them for firewood!”

Layet: “fine if you want to be like Pei with his artisan dress. And festering wounds be my guest!”

Layet looks at Chol disapprovingly and then keeps on doing her work

End scene

Scene 2

The first part is a discussion between the two, where Pei taunts Chol, and tries to convince (in a disheartened way) Chol to his lifestyle. They then visit Pei's dwelling, where he shows his goods to Chol. They then proceed to get drunk together.

Pei: “Hey Chol!...how's business? Or whatever the Managers are calling it these days?

Chol “I think its still microenterprise, yeah.... some of us still try...we'll try, try and not give our bodies to the Tem.... (grumbles) arg....who knows! With all these loans it feels like they already have my ..my ..soul!

Pei: “ah ha...(looks knowingly) but if its only those who give their bodies who can buy your goods, surely its already dirty money?..Why not just sell your body as well??(laugh)

Chol: “you laugh now but you wait, nothing good will come of this”

Pei (said mockingly) “I think I shall have one of those new Chelo miniatures, shall i transfer the money now?” (gets out his phone..starts tapping on it)

Chol (said with shock) “No don't bother, and you can have your Ram back as well,(looks peeved and gestures toward Pei) why don't you go and buy yourself some more of that ridiculous faux artisan clothing (gets his phone out)

Pei: “Oh..No, no, sorry I don't mean to offend you, we're friends.....and very old friends..Let's not let this stupid business come between us..I know I look stupid, it's just so light this fabric, in the heat.....you know?

Chol: sigh..

Pei: “We aren't so different you and I Pei, I took the call to the extractors, but you have taken many loans and advice from the managers..And where has that got you? We can all benefit from the Tem you know...Don't be such a drag.....”

Chol: “I know..I know.....My sister Zeel treats me as if I were already an extractee!

Pei: ‘ ha!..I can see that’

Pei: “today, its sooooo quiet...why not close early?

Chol: “they will send me into the hills if I don't pay these loans back, you know that?

Pei: "it's already four....come to my dwelling we can drink a bottle of Chelo wine, I have been saving it for ages...but there is no time like now!"

Pei: the extractors say not to drink with this (pulls up his top..To show his huge scar..which makes Chol wince)...but it's the only thing that helps with the pain"

Chol: "(looks at Pei with pity) Ok, ok, brother. No one should drink alone....."

(cut to next scene in Pei's dwelling)

Pei and Chol enter the dwelling, the walls are covered with knick knacks, bottles, and jars..And there are high shelves....Chol looks around very intrigued by the space and looks impressed, while Pei looks on at him very proud)

Chol: "So I see you have started to accumulate??"

Pei: "Yeah just slowly at first, back when I had my stall, but now every time I sell an organ I feel a need to just go and get something new!"

Chol is eyeing things up greedily, and picking them up and inspecting them...

Chol: "Is this real Artisan glass??" (he says holding up a glass satellite)

Pei: "Yeah, that one is a "one off"....I don't think it still works as they have changed the frequency..But it's still an accumulator's item!"

Pei: "Drink?"

Chol nods

Pei pours the wine into two glass jars...and hand one to Chol, and motions for him to sit...they sit and both take a sip....

Chol: "ummm.....Is this wine from before the contamination?"

Pei: "Yeah one of my last,... I, I hid them deep in the caves..and then forgot about them until recently...I thought I should save these for a rainy day..but that may never happen and I can always buy more...."

Cut too much later, its dark only the light of a small lamp, both people seem relaxed and a bit drunk..

Chol: " (slurring)AHHHHHHHHHHHH...this is the life, the Celo wine tastes so sweet from before the contamination!"

Pei: "I tell you Chol, go down to the extractor clinic tomorrow, they always need more people, it's worth it, I feel great! (coughs)...better without those useless globes weighing me down (hits his sides winces then laughs, then coughs)

Chol: "and...it really...it doesn't hurt?"

Pei: "well...a little bit...nothing you can't handle! You're a man Chol"

Chol: “we’ll see..we’ll see....I would like my own artisan satellite.....”

Pei lifts his glass to Chol

Pei: “to the clinic that makes things a little better” (holds his glass up, then takes a big sip)

(Cut to shot on Chol looking very contemplative)

Scene 3

The Keela Mine

This takes place in Chol and Zeel’s family home, Chol enters a room to find his sister pouring liquid into different jars and mixing it, it fizzes at times, she then pours samples of the fluid into small bottles, which she seals. Chol only enters timidly and looks with slight trepidation at what Zeel is doing Zeel is distracted by what she is doing and does not notice Chol at first.

Chol: (Cough)

Zeel: Cholo....ah.... Your here.. (she looks wired and distracted..then immediately gets back to what she was doing)

Chol: Sister, I haven’t seen you in weeks, where have you been??

Zeel: Oh...Our parents thought I should go with some of the elders, we made the pilgrimage to Keela Om.....

Chol: Ok,.....mmmm..... i could have come too..no?? Or perhaps not, I do have my loans...it’s hard to get away at the moment..

Zeel: it was amazing Cholo! I made many new friends! We drank by the fire, exchanged ideas.....you, (scoff) and your loans Chol! You remember you are a victim not a criminal.....that’s just what they want us to believe!

Chol: No, no, no... I feel fine, I had such a great evening last night with Pei. He is so much fun!

Zeel: That traitor! I am sure living in between life and death must be fun!

Chol: anyway, you never gave Pei the time of day! Not even before he became a donor....hey....What are you doing with all of these chemicals? (picks up a bottle-which Zeel quickly grabs)

Zeel: Let’s just say I am relieving this community of one of its leeches! (keeps working) Ahhh Cholo, I made such good friends, we spoke about change, about resistance, about the old days.....

..We are having a meeting next week, will you come this time Cholo...oh please do come.....(looks pleadingly..)

To think I spent all that time last year helping the managers, setting up those community projects..And all along I was helping the Tem! Phew!

Chol: Ummm well...I'm not so sure.....how do you plan on relieving the community?

Zeel: (mutters and ignores Chol keeps working)

Chol: A bomb!....really!...no!... Are you going to hurt people, again!! Oh No please Zeel don't do it!....No way...

Zeel: It's the only way brother, there is no other way out for us! The vans keep coming, shit gets worse, we have to let them know they are not welcome here anymore!

Chol: But they help us out, Pei said he feels fine, I was even thinking of signing up,I mean...(stutters.....)ju...just.....to get myself back on my feet.....it's a break for some people.....a way back...even back to the old ways.....we could use the money to buy our land back...start growing more crops...not just the chelo trees!!

Zeel: Oh poor Chol...(looks patronisingly at chol)....you just don't get it do you!! There is no way out! No way out within this system, it designed to take more and more from us, there are no limits, the 'if onlys', or the 'just this last time' are decoys to make us believe there is a way out!

They have you, you are trapped, unless you (points a finger at Chol) use your anger and frustration as a weapon Chol, and fight!

Chol: Fight?? What us, are you fucking kidding me! With what little we have, and how few we are, the Tem would simply laugh in our face!!

Zeel: I would rather die laughing then! Rather that than have the tem laugh as it uses my organs!

Chol: Please don't, don't do it, I can't bear to think what could happen to you, you know what they do to terrorists! Think of our parents!

Zeel: I do everyday...everyday I see them, in the fields, harvesting Chelo seeds, grinding their fingers to the bone, and selling shit to the few tourists who come by....I see them get the lowest prices in years for their seed flour, and while living costs are so high we live like street dwellers! I am tired of thinking...I want action!! (Looks down, then to Chol).....Please (extends her hand)....Join us....

Chol: No, you think an explosion will make a difference, you are mad!..... I have my family...My debts...my life is here....

Zeel: What life? This is no life, and you know it! Its small crumbs, small pitiful crumbs, and there won't be any left of us after the extractors are done!

Chol: Zeel, oh I am going to go.....this is too much...Please don't do it....please it's not the way...your mad!

(Scene cut to Chol filling out a form- for the extractor Van....)

(Cut to scene with Zeel..taping all small bottles to her body)

End of scene....

Scebe 4

Shots of an operation taking place and oragns being removed, cuit with shots of caravan exploding.

Extractee Consent Form

NAME:.....**AGE:**.....

.....

NATIONALITY:.....**PROFESSION:**..

.....

ANY HEALTH

CONDITIONS:.....

.....

ORGANS TO SELL:

.....

.....

I.....agree to sell
my.....at the standard organ price. I
relinquish all ownership of this organ and its right to be used
and accept it is now legal property of the TEM.

I agree to the following procedure and will not make any
claims against the TEM should any complications or side
affects result during or after. I accept all repercussions as my
own responsibility.

All payments shall be made the day after operation and no
payment shall be made if the organ is faulty or there are
complications that affect the quality of the said organ.

I.....agree to the above conditions and agree that all information provided is true and correct.

SIGNED:.....DATE:.....
.....

2)

Synophresia Nervosa

Synopsis:

The video revolves around a group of artisans who work in a guild systems in studios, and had previously been employed during the enterprise years. We follow three characters that all have different issues. We begin with Erosa and Lycian eating dinner and speaking about the problems they have and the introduction of the 'ideas lab'. We see what happens as artisans enter the ideas lab and how their ideas are extracted. We then move to scenes with Lox who has starting to lose a grip on reality and exhibits irrational behaviour in the studio. Erosa also begins to become drawn to the ideas lab and accepts the visits. Lycian becomes frustrated and unsure after seeing what's happening to all the artisans- a condition called synophresia nervosa – he decides to leave. The video ends with Lox cutting off her limbs to make a sculpture.

The Artisans: Synopsis and Characters

Set in a fictional past or future- where the environment has been changed to a much dryer hotter condition and people are stratified and ordered by class and dress.

This forms the second films in part of a trilogy, the first film is called Keela Mine, and is about the indigenous group, who have been severely affected by the changes to their land, and are in what i have called the 'post enterprise years'. They are being forced to sell their organs to pay off microenterprise debts.

The artisans are considered above the indigenous group, and have more privileges to artisan status which means they can sell their work in established networks and at a higher price. The artisans are themselves a kind of state controlled creation- having been used as exemplars during the enterprise years, they have been put into studio groups and are given a weekly fee.

As the enterprise years have obviously failed- they are aware that their role is precarious, and many complain they are no longer able to sell work, and all their fee is going towards materials for works that sit on the shelf (non-reproduction, destruction of value?).

They are now being called up to what is called the Ideas Lab, as a way to pay back their artisan fee's. This is where they give their ideas, dreams and thoughts (as creatives) directly to the Tem through the system of direct thought extraction. This is a procedure where they are asked to put on organic head masks that encapsulate their heads and during a period take all ideas, dreams and thoughts directly from the artisan. These are then mainly used for advertising and new strategies for the managers and designs for new products (but also represent a kind of thought control)

This procedure leaves the artisans drained and in a state of shock, it also causes them to suffer from a condition called Synthophresia which means they struggle to decipher between the world in their heads and that of the real world.

Due to the increase of extractions the artisans are making less money from selling their art, and they find that most of their ideas have been made already by the Tem. Due to this, and the fact that many have gone crazy with synthophresia many are struggling to get by, and in a bid to push the limits one artisan comes up with a plan to use his own body in his art. This scene includes the artisan Lox cutting off her own fingers to put in her work.

Another artisan Erosa who has refused to be extracted looks for work on the fringes of society, and has controversial reactions with the managers who try and coerce him into the clinics. Lycia who is reticent at first has now become a mouth piece for the Tem and tries to coerce Erosa back to the clinics.

Characters:

Lox: Very romantic, and embraces the whole ideal of the artist, she never speaks in any of the scenes, as she is transfixed in what she is doing, being very sensitive she becomes quickly influenced by synthophresia, and a decent into madness happens.

Erosa: who believes very much in his role as an artisan, and can be seen as stubborn and inflexible is very resistant to the Ideas Lab, and after two visits he runs away from his studio and tries to find other ways to get by.

Lycian: Is a quick minded artisan who previously was involved in many artisan led projects, while at first she is very reticent to join the Ideas Labs, she become quite involved in the process and builds a relationship with some of the managers

Manager 1: A tight lipped bureaucrat, who although unhappy follows rules fastidiously and feels he has a moral high ground on the artisans and has no time for their creative tempers.

Extras for scenes in the Ideas Lab:

Scene overview

Scene 1: Lox in her studio- making objects, generally engaged in her work

(music/sounds/close up inspection shots) (there is a push towards a blurring between art and life- personal items, dishes...other things that increase the proximity-Lox is involved in physically reproducing her object- a feeling of multiples..an erotic bond- or maternal bond..)

(How can reproduction be represented? Consider bodies and birth? Think about Le Guin? Consider creative 'reproduction' through making art? Perhaps this is part of Lox's condition? She is desperately trying to reproduce? A biological urge that is replaced by the physical manifestation..)

Consider how is birth controlled for the artisans? Perhaps they have been discouraged in giving birth or having families?- there time given exclusively to the cause of the enterprise years...their fee is cut if they give birth? Or father a child?

REPRODUCTION: BIRTH/SLEEP/EAT/LEISURE/PLAY/SEX/EDUCATION/IOVE

Scene2: Dinner scene with Erosa and Lycian (this is the main scene where dialogue of crucial, so each line must be written with full intention, and choreographed accordingly- how it is delivered is very important- and if you can keep it brief this is good- sound recording essential- so do both Boom, or mic in clothing or record separately. The key idea for this piece is the situation all the other action scenes rely on it....Focus on eating and leisure time- and the blurring between the two- focus on the intrusion of work into sleep, and a consideration of birth or children??...

Scene 3: Ideas Lab with Lox and another (physical extraction scene- faces bodies ect very important) manager 1 calls Lox and other participants to the lab and puts on head gear..

Scene 4: Erosa and Lycian in the Ideas Lab (faces and extraction)

Scene 5: Lox in the ideas lab- montage of her ideas, and then in her studio- going mad (this scene represents a complete blurring of the personal and corporate- so scenes of both a personal nature and a corporate of production together (montage found and recorded))

Scene 6: Erosa and Lycian argue over Erosa leaving, and what he is going to do, they talk about Lox and her madness (takes place in studio).(a more physical theatre piece with some dialogue but more guttural and shouted..??)

Erosa is packing his bag when Lycian comes in, she has pamphlets she is holding regarding the ideas lab, he chastises her for her involvement, and arguments breaks out and tensions flare, he is breaking his ties and leaving the guild, she protests, he protests, and they discuss things..

Scene 7: Lox cutting her fingers off for her new piece (the idea of artistic sacrifice- this becomes votive/ritual and enters into a dialogue with destruction/creation)

End

The Artisans

Scene 3

The two characters are sitting having dinner in a bar, they are mainly talking about work, and how it is unsatisfactory. Erosa feels betrayed as many potential buyers have pulled out at the last minute and he has received no compensation for the materials and labour. Lycian is more worried at how many times she is being asked to attend the ideas lab, and recounting her new experiences.

Erosa: 'Look, what is this, they feed us now....it's all gristle (close up on plate as Erosa tries in vain to cut through the organ on his plate)

Lycian: 'Its only 5 Ram, it tastes ok at least'

Erosa: 'I know it's just I miss the namine stew they used to make here....no point crying over grazing animalsI guess'

Lycian: 'So I was approached by a manager the other day- out of the blue- he came and handed me a red envelope...I looked at him like well yes??...I think he thought it was a joke.....so he showed me his side chip and the Tem seal on the envelope.....I opened it and it basically was a court summons to the 'Tem departmental Ideas Lab'.....it said something about how all artisans signed up to the status scheme are being requested to feed back into the bank??..'

Erosa: 'Ha you have managed to get out of going to the Lab all this time?'

Lycian: 'what? have you been summoned too?'

Erosa: 'all of us at Montveb were given our letters of 'obligation' months ago, Claris must be too far up the hills to be bothered with'

Lycian: 'Obviously not far enough.....So I went along...as this pernicious manager was watching me like a criminal, expecting it to be a community type project....but I was quite forcefully strapped to a chair interrogated and then asked to don this appendage....and after that it pretty much went blank..until I'm being given some cactus sweets at the door and thanked for my 'contribution' to the 'Ideas Lab'. I was too dazed to be appalled...did that really just happen?? I mean what are the others saying??'

Erosa: 'There seems to be divided opinions at my centre, some feel like you, and others, the ones who have been going for longer, don't seem to mind anymore- Chelu explained it to me like this, he said 'you didn't expect them to just pay out this maintenance fee for free did you?' I guess I did, I think the whole thing is strange...I just don't trust it?'

Lycian: 'Our fee was set up by the Tem during the enterprise years- as we were supposed to be role models for the other groups, and come on its hardly generous, and now that the managers have been moved to different quarters they don't have any room for our work.....and we don't see the Tem agents any more... so who buys it....why do we even bother making it?'

Erosa: 'I know I was given six commissions by the Tem last year and not one has come to fruition... they are all still sitting dormant in my studio..I have debts I am paying off with my fee on a weekly basis because of the materials costs.....I feel like a fool grinding stone all day'

Lycian looks down and holds her head, and squints as if she has a headache...

Erosa: 'Are you ok?'

Lycian: '(befuddled) yes, yes fine just a headache....it's strange I have had a few of these turns since last week....I was waiting for the train, when I stared up at a billboard, I saw one of my dreams, one I had as a child..a reoccurring dream depicted on the billboard....I closed my eyes as my head started to tingle, and by the time I opened them it had changed...I must have been tired....been seeing things....but the sensation was the same as this now...'

Harrison Learning Centre Shoot- Scenes 2/4

Performers:

Carina- Lox

Magda- Phye

Gavin- Manger 1

Assistant- Brian

Setting- the corner of the ground floor in the learning centre using one of the 'Pods' and surrounding area, to film from between 8-11pm in the evening.

Equipment: Camera, tripod, lights, boom pole, mic, dolly

Costume- tunic, vest, (actors to wear their normal clothes on bottom half) hands, arms, neck painted, hair gelled back and painted blue) belts.

Props- extraction head gear, forms, clip board

Scenes in shooting order:

1: Lox and Phye (Carina and Magda) are sitting and waiting, can move around, read a book, lean up against the wall, looking tired, bored and a little nervous...

2: Manager (Gavin) is sitting and filling a form out then gets up and calls 'Lox 2411 please enter the pod' from his clipboard and she enters and he puts on the head gear and then asks her 'sign here and here'. As the machine is turned on a close up of Lox's face reveals a transitions through different moods emotions. The manager then unties and leads to couches, places a bowl of sweets and motions and says 'eat'.

3: Manager 1 calls 'Phye 1422 enter the pod' and follows the same process as above..transitions through different emotions and moods, and move face and body, manager then unties and leads her to couches, motions to sweets...

3: Lox and Phye lay around dazed on couches and slowly recompose themselves, and get up and stumble out looking bemused and disoriented.

The Artisans Scene 8

In this scene Erosa is packing up his studio, he looks forlorn and distracted. Lycian come in looking for him, and seems happy to see him, she has been looking for him for a long time. Erosa sees the handful of pamphlets that Lycian carries regarding the Ideas Lab, and chastises her for her involvement, she then reacts by regurgitating Tem speak.

Erosa is in his studio packing away things looking sad and confused.....Lycian comes in..

Lycian: Oh Ero, your here, thats great, I had been looking for you everywhere, I asked around but no one had seen you for weeks??

Erosa: Yeah, I'm here (said with trepidation) Just had to get away for a while and clear my head, needed a break from the Lab...

Lycian: What are you doing with all of your things?

Erosa: I think I will give them to the others, well the useful things, the work can just go....

Lycian: What you're leaving? Leaving the guild?

Erosa: Yes and probably here too.....

Lycian: Oh no please Erosa you can't leave, I need you here, as a friend, sometimes its only you I can talk to!

Erosa: Well.....(mumble)...Things have changed.... ..Whats this shit in your hands? More propaganda? More information about the 'benefits of feeding back'! doing good for the Tem?

If you think I'm staying to be part of that mess ..then I don't think we can be friends!

Lycian: Oh (looks sheepish..) yes these, well...(waits then thinks, screws up her face and then blurts) The Ideas Lab only enables the continued payment of the

artisan fee and the rental of studios, it is non invasive and a chance to share ideas amongst the community!'.....(stops..looks tired..rubs her head) Um..well.....its ok.... stay here....I mean what are you going to do... Where will you go? out there! (point to window) You don't know the Shee town codes...you won't last a day!...We have so much here...you belong with us...

Erosa: listen to you, you don't even know what you are saying any more, Ly your gone, (walk towards with sadness, and make eye contact- Lycian smiles and then quickly turns away and holds her head)

Erosa then grabs the leaflets that Lycian holds and throws them on the floor

Erosa: this shit is messing with your head, and yet you still trek up and down the studios selling it to our friends!

Lycian recomposes herself and literally switches into action and speaks robotically

Lycian: All participants have reported mainly positive experiences of the Ideas Lab, and the chance to continue being a part of the Artisan community is so important for all Artisans, We need you as much as all contributors'

Erosa looks angry and throws his hands up in exasperation!

Erosa: What, what the hell have they done to you, Ly! where are you (start shaking Lycian) You don't even know what you are saying!.....(Looks into her eyes, and sees nothing)

Erosa: Please leave!.....(motions...) Now!

Lycian walks out looking dishevelled

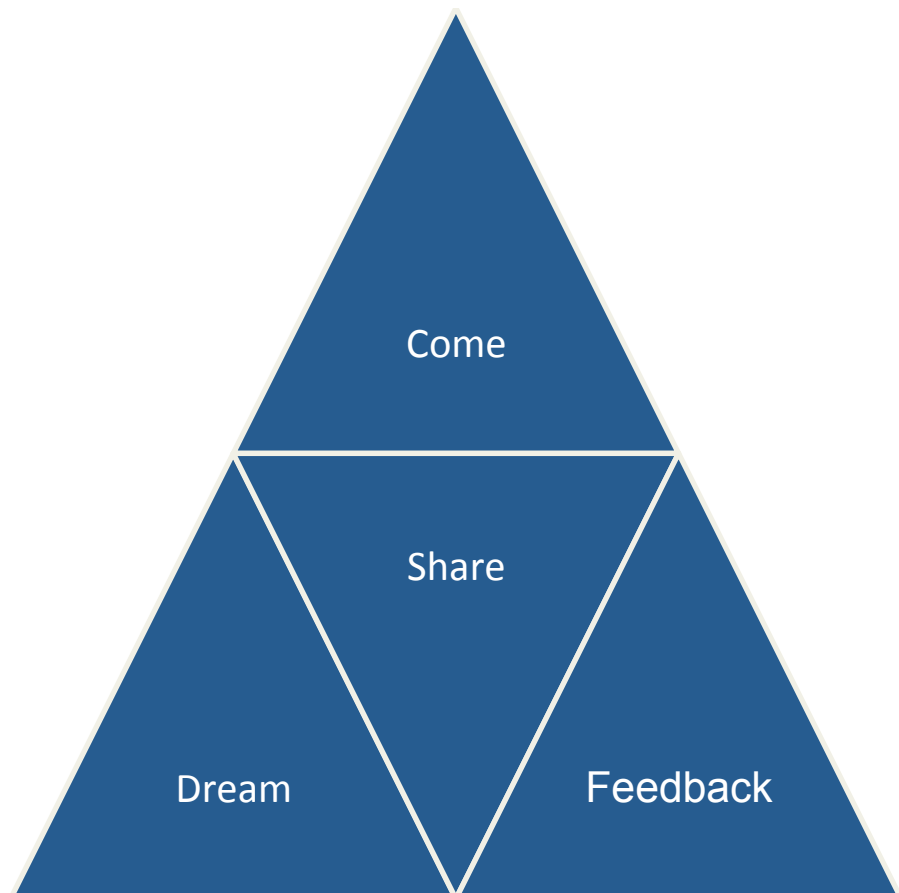
Erosa packs his stuff, fills a bag and leaves..

Tem Departmental

Ideas

Lab

Artisan co-production



DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? PLEASE
ATTEND A SESSION AND ASK THE MANAGERS

ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THE
PROGRAM. HEAR OTHERS TESTIMONIALS.

TEM DEPARTMENTAL IDEAS LAB

Manger use only

Donors consent form 2.4460

Notes on

donor:.....
.....
.....
.....

Artisan to complete

Name.....

Age.....

Studio residence.....

I.....agree to attend the clinic fortnightly in order to
continue to receive my artisan status weekly fee.

I.....Agree that all ideas used from the extraction process
shall not be used again in any work or products after the period
of.....If i do i must forfeit my weekly artisan allowance.

Iagree that any side effects, such as nervousness, synophresia, visions, tiredness or any illness shall not be the concern of the TEM and I.....take full responsibility for them.

Signed.....

Manager use only

Any significant changes to artisan during or after procedure?.....
.....
.....

3)

Synopsis

The film (the third part in the trilogy) explores the subconscious and virtual worlds between a manager and the system he is in (know throughout the trilogy as Tem).

In this film I explore how subjectivity has become a terrain for accumulation, and how the lack of distinction between work and leisure has meant a breakdown of desires and feelings into exchangeable events- as we see in the online media world of blogs, Facebook, twitter ect.

The film revolves around a manager- who can be seen, as a normal person- but with leanings in sympathy to those he directs and he has an altruistic side. He has suffered a growing dissatisfaction from his lack of contact with anyone from higher up as all information about his job and duties is feed to him through a digital chip. He has now begun to spend more and more of his personal time engaged on line-in the virtual 'free' space.

This has been noted by the Tem- who send an agent into the mangers 'free' time-an attempt to disrupt it- and then commences an interview-which seeks to root out any disorder.

During the interview as the manager recalls certain events we are switched back to these events and a 'surrogate' plays the other roles of characters (like family, other managers, tribes people, artisans) and we see these events unfolding.

As the agent tries to bring up some of the events we are met with glitches- problem in the system- things that just don't work or fit- clips of other times/spaces- clips of people enacting physical labour- a kind of tear or rip in the surface of immateriality.

Characters:

Manager-A 'good' employee, who is perhaps at times a bit of a do-gooder- can be seen as altruistic and caring, but works with a degree of professionalism and self depreciation. He is frustrated with his life and not afraid to show how he feels about it.

Agent- a professional par excellence, who has become so used to dealing with employees they have almost removed all of their personal qualities or their personal qualities have become a kind of smooth morphed language which is inhuman. Can be very authoritarian.

Surrogate- A medium in which any character can be transported, plays a huge range of characters from men to women and young and old.

Scenes

1. **We are in the office with the manager, who is filling out forms and tidying up- He sits down wearily and looks at his desk where 'nodes' are arranged in a state on the table..he thinks for a while, and seems to go through real pain and emotion at what to do- looking like a junkie who is trying to restrain themselves... keeping picking up ones and then putting them back, looking at his desk and his clock....finally he chooses one from the device and plugs one in.**
2. **We then move into the virtual space, He is sitting at a table, he looks at the table in front of him, and begins moving things around (virtually, as if moving on a touch screen, he looks totally engrossed in what he is doing eyes flaring and twitching/twitching brows)...**
3. **A Tem agent enters his virtual space- he look up surprised to see them- he goes through a series of facial expressions- first he thinks he is seeing something and has to do a double take- then is shy- then reactionary- i.e.-what are you doing here?-you can't really be here!..This is my personal zone!...etc. and then an interview ensues.**
4. **The interview begins....as it begins the agent 'takes' us to a different space- as all life experiences are recorded in the system...but as it moves on the manager often does not recognise the people or events...is it him??**

Indigenous- A meeting 'on location' of a market staller and the manager- where all advice given by the Tem has failed and he is struggling to bring any hope and he starts losing his authority as he sides with the subject...(PLAYED BY SURROGATE)

Personal- He sits in his home (again fictional space- the house looks too nice..He questions whether it is actually his? Of course it is the agent responds- we reward good work here..) he is having a conversation about work with his wife....he speaks about a colleague... (FILM CLIP)

Artisan- he interviews the artisan who is having problems with the lab- usual formality, but the artisan is suffering from synophresia and the interview becomes more personal....(FILM CLIP)

They return to the interview- the agent is stressing how important our relationship with the artisans is- when we experience a glitch- a cut in the scene to a close up of someone's working body- The manager reacts- saying what was that? The agent says- oh nothing just some piracy- we have had problems recently...

Personal-he is at home- there has been a burglary- he discusses it with his wife- he feels it is part of a cover-up someone was taking information.. ..(FILM CLIP)

(He breaks in and asks how this is relevant for his work?- the agent responds by suggesting that both home and work life are important when undertaking an investigation)

His wife then speaks with the voice of the manager- and asks his about his commitment to work...

Back at the interview table- the manager begins to look confused- starts looking at his hands..

We then move on to-

Slums- he is on a visit to register and collect data on the slum dwellers- trying to get them to sign up with the microfinance schemes or buys chip devices- when visiting one house he recognises an old manager- who he knows- and starts asking why he is now there..what happened?? (FILM CLIP)

Back at the interview table

(during most scenes things begin to break down- crackle pop and the scenes of labour come through or scenes of deserts ECT...)

personal- at his doctors- he is complaining about a rash he has-and calluses on his hands even though he never does manual labour?? (SURROGATE)

5. The glitches start to play into the scene with increasing frequency and the agent calls off the interview- suggesting it is just some harmless piracy- but we will have to rectify this and get back to you- please go back to work- we will contact you very shortly...

6. The manager returns to work, he sits at his desk- he looks at his hands- the calluses are bleeding..

SCRIPT

Scene 3

(recorded with lapel mic's)

Manager is sitting scanning through on the light table...he looks up and an agent is sitting right across from him. He looks around..and double checks..

Manager: what!...sorry what are you doing here.....were..we supposed to meet today? Have I forgotten a meeting...but it can't be as I'm scheduled as finished many hours go...

How is it possible for you to be here- this is my personal node?

Do you need me to reconnect into work mode?

Agent: We run the system, and have good relationships with the division that owns persochip, but not to worry, I will not take up much of your time, I am merely here to clarify some questions that have been raised at your latest division meeting'

'Do you object to taking part in an informal interview'

Manager: here or in work mode?

Agent: It does not really make a difference- the system does not discriminate..

Manager: yes, sure ok, should I be concerned?

Agent: that all depends on you, and what you have to say? But I'm sure it will be fine..

(the manager shifts and begins to look very awkward)

Manager: coughs, ok then,

Agent: Just to be sure you don't forget any of the events being discussed we will travel back into the systems memory and re-play the events that take place, so we can go over what exactly is happening, and you can give your side of the story...is this ok?

Manager; sure

Scene 4

Cut to net scene, we are in another space where two actors (the manager) and surrogate are having a conversation. The surrogate stands behind what looks like a stall...there are a few objects and a sign on the stall...

VO- I don't quite remember this...day....Was it a long time ago?

VO- Yes a while but I am sure you can't deny this is you?

(we cut through around 3 backgrounds...the scene changes..)

VO- Yes, yes of course...(seeming very confused)

Cut to scene- with manager and stall holder- background of desert.....

Manager: Your Stall (he holds a clip board and points to it), I'm afraid...You will have to move further downstream....we are re-gen-er-ating this space...

Surrogate: Again, again, I must move again? (Starts to breakdown)

Manager: well, we do need you to move for your safety!

Surrogate: where, where do I move, to where? WHERE The stream flows like a river..breaks down...again

Manager: you can have till the end of next month, but please-please you have to move..

Surrogate: slowly bend down and curl into a ball....weeping sounds

Manager: Look you can have until the end of the year....well a few months...please no.. don't do that!

CUT TO INTERVIEW

Agent: It's not in our policy to give extra time...explain your choices here?

Manager: I used clause 15 section 80, to persuade using an embellishment of the truth...

Agent: this clause is only applicable if a code 61 emerges

Manager: I feared his behaviour would turn into a 61

Agent nods and writes something down..

Scene 5

We are located in a large house (scene from Le Mepris but surrogate plays VO) but the manager stands in the scene...

VO: (manager)“ Is this my house..(laughs) I don't remember living in such luxury!”

VO: (agent) “of course, we reward all out managers with more than adequate living arrangements...”

Manager: “Darling what's the matter?”

VO: (Surrogate): “Oh it's nothing, a headache.....tired...I guess”

Manager: “So work has become quite unbearable this week- We were given new chips, the information is all over the place.....We can't ask questions!...there is no longer a help section...everyone looks to me! I have no Answers.....”

VO-“ Why do you never ask me first about my day? You must learn to just follow instructions and try and stop helping people!”

Manager: Oh come on you like me being helpful, Helping you at least..

VO: “Can’t you tell me something good about your day..

Manager: “well let’s see it’s hard...I will try...

Well today after we switched on our chips Clev did the strangest thing...well its quite hard to describe....but I think he was confused....and he kept...well he kept on calling me and Svin, the names of his cohabitants...and telling us to go home as he had to work!!....

VO: ‘And then?’

Manager: “Well this seemed to go on for quite a while...he was being very insistent...he would walk back and forth and enact moments he had experienced with his family...and then at one point he Grabbed Svin and embraced him and kissed him!!!

VO: “Oh no! I don’t believe this...why would you make up such lies..just to entertain me!”

CUT TO INTERVIEW

Agent: “You know you are not to discuss any work events with cohabitants?

Manager: “Yes I know but....I had to share the story...it was harmless...I mean, I did not really remember telling my wife...I thought I told another work colleague..”

Agent: “If such an event did happen as you say...it should have been reported straight away, to us...”

Manager: “Well yes, I see (*Manager looks away and looks suspicious*)”

Scene 6

Cut to scene in studio (we can shift from time to time in to other spaces and studios, The manager speaks to the artist as in an interview situation-they are sometimes in same shot- so scene must be played to enable best position for actor)

Manager: “Hello Gris! How have you been?? Filling your quotas down at the lab?”

Artist: “Ah yes, yes, yes sure.....I do try, I, I have tried, to keep up with all of it..and the production of course....do you want to see what I am up to?”

Manager: “Ah yeah... I get pleasure from seeing your work.....”

Artist: “But one thing first.....I must ask you.....if you could please register me as having been to the lab next month....I don’t feel so well this week....I mean.....I am

not complaining- you know me....I just have been seeing all sorts of things...I find it hard to sleep..."

(cut to multiple scenes of anguished faces)

Manager: "Well....tell me have you reported it to the lab??"

Artist: "well yes I did but.....well they just said it would go before my next visit....and on the next visit they said that it was normal...not to worry and gave me these tablets to sleep..."

Manager: "Well.....(scratch head look up)... it.... Should.. be ok if I write you off for only one month??"

Artist: "You are so kind....please look at this.....something I'm working on..."

CUT TO NEXT SCENE

Agent: "We take it very seriously when our artisans are not functioning properly, and if so they must follow lab procedure- under no circumstances are managers authorised to 'sign off' artisans from their duties, even under these such circumstances..."

So tell me do you have a reason for your lapsed judgement?"

Manager: "Oh this day...I do recall...it...I mean I do remember why I made this choice...which I know is not usually authorised.....(is looking perplexed)

(We start to get a glitch...A slow motion shot of an axe hitting dirt)

Manager: "What was that, was it me....my memory.....I can't recall ever using such an implement..."

Agent: "No simply a bit of viral interference... nothing that should get in the way of the interview...so what was your reason?"

Manager: "I have known the artist for such a long time...he is old...much older than the others...I must insist I took pity..."

(Another glitch occurs a longer clip of arms swinging the pick axe)

Another virus?"

Agent: "yes yes.....Ok we will look into this....human error is permitted in some instances..."

Scene 7

Wife looks in the mirror- walks to bathroom- manager is in bath as husband.....wife walks out...manager walks in room and sits down and they speak...then cut.

VO:Wife: "so do we have insurance?"

Manager: “ I can’t quite tell....I’m sure we can get some things back?’

Wife: “I feel violated?”

Manager: “by the burglary or work.....or me?”

Wife: “Why do you say these things? The burglary of course!”

Manager: “I can’t remember what’s been taken....so as what we need to replace
(*stares into space*)”

Wife: “Where is your commitment to work, to our house....to us, these days...(mumble)...you’re fading”

Manager: “I’m not quite sure what to do anymore....and then there is who I ask about what to do”

Wife: “where is your commitment.....you must commit....your instructions are clear
(*said in voice of agent*)”

CUT TO INTERVIEW

Manager: “Stands up and raises his hands... ‘what is this! I don’t remember saying this....I don’t even know who this women is!”

Agent: “you do not even recognise your own wife?”

Manager: “How many wives do I have”

Agent: “Calm down, going through the files can sometimes be alarming, and we often do not remember things as they actually were.....the point is that it is not advisable to speak about work in such a way....we do give clear objectives.....”

Manager: “I did not say that.....I mean I may complain from time to time....but this is my personal mode....”

(*scene cut to labour shot, and back as agent holds her head..as if she has a headache..*)

Agent: “Ok, ok, we must move on as the virus seems to be returning...”

Scene 8

Manager: “Cedre? Is that you? You’re living here now?”

VO:Cedre: “Oh yes you, I remember you?.....from the south division...”

Manager: “What happened why did they get rid of you?”

Cedre: “No, no they would have had me for longer....for life I’m sure....and even in death!”

Manager: “why or how did...did you leave...why leave?”

Cedre: “I started to notice my days were spent as a manager...”

Manager: “but it’s your job...”

Cedre: “No, no.....you don’t understand...all of my days...my life...my wife, my dreams, my meals...all of it.....it was all part of some wider plan....so I left...”

Manager: “and here....you live here??.....what is it like?”

Cedre: “its life....at its bare-ist.....it must be real I tell myself”

CUT TO INTERVIEW

Agent: “you are familiar with clause 36 in your contract?”

Manager: “yes”

Agent: “well it states that any manager is not permitted to engage with any retired professional...and all conduct in the shee town must be conducted through our offices??”

Manager: well we needed a sample for the tests, and the chips were not selling...so I took the matter into my own hands....I have not seen this person again I assure you..

(glitch cuts into scene this time it is more horrible...more blood and pain)

Manager: *(looks shocked and then says)* “what is this...where is this coming from....?”

Agent: “oh, again its nothing, we must be experiencing piracy.....we need to wrap this up...”.

Scene 9

Doctor (surrogate): “and these pains you feel.....where are they?”

Manager: “mainly in my arms and back...like tired muscles..”

Doctor: “I see..and any other symptoms”

Manager: “well....I keep waking up after awful dreams with these on my hands...*(shows the calluses...like labourers hands)*”

Doctor: “Oh I can proscribe some cream for those...sounds like stress and lack of sleep.....take these...”

CUT TO INTERVIEW

Agent: “So you have not been well, and have not spoken to us about this on any occasion??”

Manager: "I can't how can I contact you....the contact file in my office is full...and pending sorting....its overloaded...I would never get seen"

(cut to glitch....and then both move as if there has been a quake....)

Agent: "I am very sorry but I do need to cut this short- and give you time to feedback- we will be in contact again shortly....do not make any more moves or you will endanger your position.."

Scene 10

Cut to office....where manager is sitting looking perplexed....then angry...he squeezes his hands together tightly....and screws up his face.....then drops of 'blood' come out of his hands.....he looks at them and we see the calluses..

END

Global Development and Cultural Production: New Territories for Neoliberalism, New Spaces of Accumulation

Abstract:

This paper addresses the relationship between global development and neoliberalism. Demonstrating that global development further reinforces the strong hold of capital in non-capitalised or indigenous spaces through a two-fold process. It firstly justifies and sanctions economic liberalisation in the global South and secondly it exports ideas of neoliberal enterprise culture and finance. Global development has employed culture to strengthen the case for entrepreneurialism as a 'way out' of poverty and also provides an example of how neoliberal forms of commerce such as tourism 'tap into' indigenous livelihoods. The financialisation of development not only represents the full integration of neoliberalism and development but as I will argue reflects the growth of sub-prime credit. I use a variety of ethnographic examples to explicate how development processes are representative of neoliberal forms of government and focus on specific examples where culture has been used as a tool for development. Arguing that we must be aware of the problems of both development and the use of culture for commerce as we face continuing failures in the global capitalist economy.

One of the defining contributions of the neoliberal era is the impact of globalisation and the reach of global capitalism. This 'reach' was only possible with the help of the Bretton Woods financial institutions, and ironically at times under the auspice of 'development'. Global development is inextricably bound to neoliberalism. It is bound firstly to global financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, which operate from the agenda of global finance capital, and secondly it has become bound

to espousing ideas of liberalism and neoliberal enterprise culture. In a time when we witness more crises and growing inequality we must ask should these economic models continue to be exported and incorporated as *de rigueur* in non-capitalist spaces? This paper will address the matrix that is development, neoliberalism and culture- or cultural production, arguing that the pervasiveness of neoliberal dogma in development has extended to ‘incorporate’ indigenous culture into a logic of accumulation. Commoditising ‘difference’ and strangulating resistance through the covert practices of enterprise and cultural tourism.

Indigenous communities have often been the testing ground for new programs of development and in this paper it will be argued that as we see the financialisation of development we come to witness the very flawed practice that is entrepreneurialism and the co-opting of culture for commerce. Development is a sphere where capital accumulation can hide like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, ‘doing good’ while simultaneously undermining national autonomy. The previous twenty years has been marked by global financial institutions ‘austerity’ programs and chronic ‘structural adjustments’ which claim to alleviate poverty and ‘assimilate’ the global South. The current *modus operandi* is the promotion of ‘enterprise’ thinking and microfinance, which governs the private spaces of NGO’s and social enterprise. Global development has become a form of primitive accumulation hidden beneath the rhetoric of economy and the facade of humanitarianism. In development we can witness an important insecticide between global Norths and Souths, and as Samir Amin (Amin:1996) has argued ‘culture’ can be used to disguise economic issues. There has been a continual focus on ‘culture’ or on local ‘cultures’ within development practice directing the lens away from the totality of global poverty to

the singular case study. This approach denies the structural causes of the displacement and poverty of indigenous groups, and focuses instead on concepts like ‘social capital’. The relationship between debt and development is historic but has taken on new and more virulent forms in recent history through the proliferation of microfinance and sub-prime loans. In exploring the ways that enterprise culture has infiltrated indigenous and agrarian cultural production we can illuminate an underlying logic of capital accumulation, and ask in what ways has neoliberalism produced a new consciousness in artists and cultural producers? Using ethnographic case studies where enterprise culture, *ethnodevelopment* and microfinance are being delivered we can shed light on the economic biases of global development and make a case for a return to class politics in indigenous communities.

New Zealand is a global microcosm of the ways in which neoliberalism can co-opt indigenous culture. Enterprise thinking has been the go-to development schema for New Zealand Maori since the 1980sⁱ and has been used globally to put the onus back on individuals to pull themselves out of poverty. Simon During (2000) writes that the liberalising of state owned assets in New Zealand opened up a space for the commodification of culture and land which enabled the co-opting of Maori ideas of indigeneity into models of neoliberal market entrepreneurship. Indigenous communities in the global North have experienced neoliberalism and the question of how to negotiate their culture within the economy in very different ways than those in the South. The struggle for those in the global North has been around ‘saving’ or preserving their culture in the face of western cultural and economic domination. For those in the global South it has often been about surviving. However the strategies and practices of global development have been very similar and the ‘success’ stories-

represented by the commercialisation of culture for tourism (Rotorua, Santa Fe) have been exported from North to South. Epifanio San Juan (2002) and Vivek Chibber (2013) address what they see as the ‘problem’ of post-colonialism at least within critical theory, as it has avoided addressing global systems of hegemony and fixated of the pre-eminence of culture over economics. Chibber argues that decades of research on ‘sub-altern’ studies have failed to address the surrounding political economic conditions of many global South countries (Chibber: 2013). This has meant that often issues seem de-contextualised and can be treated as singular rather than addressing the now very global issue of indigenous identity. This dilemma between post-colonial identity and indigeneity and their inclusion within the neoliberal oeuvre shows the complexity of the indigenous subject in history. However the steady decline in collective resistance in indigenous communities based in the global North since the neoliberal era attests to their co-option.

Development logic relies on the binaries of; developed/ underdeveloped, North/South and modern/traditional to set up ideological proposals that engender a change from one side to the other. The logic of modern equals more developed and thus progressive relies as much on the construction of the idea of the west, as it does the eastⁱⁱ. What the binary and to a degree development logic fails to acknowledge is its relationship not to modernity and accordingly a ‘progressive’ ideology but to capitalism. Development as ideology and practice fails to acknowledge the economic base of class structure and domination, and too often fails to see the global North’s position in the globalised class structure. Progress can be understood in relation to the temporal elements of capitalism, but what must be understood is that global dialectics which engender ‘change’ do so at the cost of stagnation or exploitation in

other places/spaces. It is crucial then that we locate indigenous culture and struggles within the wider systems of global capitalism. We should ask in which instances is indigenous culture a force of resistance to capitalism and in which it has been subsumed?

Both Arturo Escobar's (1996) and Gilbert Rist's (2001) critiques of development deconstruct the myth of the 'third world' and the way that development language and discourse has been naturalised to serve the interests of the ruling elite and countries. They both point to its historical and social construction as a western myth, and illuminate how assumptions about humanitarianism and development thinking are grounded in negotiations between economic dominance and power, and moral obligation and appearances. Escobar identifies the ways in which the 'third world' or 'underdeveloped world' was conceptualised:

"Development," as a mode of thinking and a source of practices, soon became an omnipresent reality. The poor countries became the target of an endless number of programs and interventions that seemed to be inescapable and that ensured their control. (Escobar: 1988:430)

Rist Argues that 'development' as discourse worked so well as it is open ended and makes no claims for results as its always 'getting better' and by allying a social process with a natural law one obscures the social history and replaces it with the idea of a natural evolution (Rist: 2001: 27). This relationship between North and South; whereby the global South becomes indebted to the North through a process of economic and cultural strangulation, has meant that huge swathes of indigenous and agrarian communities have been and still areⁱⁱⁱ expelled from their land. This process

which Marx (1976) defined as primitive accumulation^{iv} sets the stage for contemporary development. Post war Keynesianism in many global South countries meant indigenous people in Central and South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania were ‘put to work’ in new industrial centres and factories, the urbanisation of New Zealand Maori reflecting this migration. However the dismantling of the welfare state in many countries followed sharply on from John Williamson’s Washington Consensus (1989), that advocated a move from a state controlled economy to a liberal ‘hands off’ or market driven approach^v. These new governing policies left a gaping hole in many countries where the state’s ‘roll back’ left social needs exposed and wanting and ghettoised indigenous communities were in “need” of assistance. Under neoliberalism privatization and the closure of many industrial centres in New Zealand saw a displaced and oppressed urban Maori. The fall-out of this urbanisation is traversed in Alan Duff’s *Once Were Warriors* where the only ‘way back’ is through Tikanga Maori. It was only with the neoliberal privatisation of many state run companies that indigenous people and peasants had to return to the ‘handmade’ in what can be seen as a ‘deskilling’^{vi} or imposed ‘traditionalism’ as they are remade as traditional cultural producers. The pernicious relationship between culture and economy is poignantly reflected in the film *Samson and Delilah* (Warwick Thornton: 2009), where the need to produce objects to sell to the tourists sets up an undesirable dependency which is allied more to desperation than cultural pride. As the art object is divorced from its cultural logic and put into circulation it not only loses its ‘aura’^{vii} but redefines the artists labour, if this labour becomes ‘performative’^{viii} it further separates the artist from their original cultural meaning. In these situations of ‘imposed traditionalism’ the artist often has to learn and re-perform their own culture.

“Development” in the global South has now become the domain of international financial institutions. The global agenda of neoliberalism had to fully infiltrate the global North before being ‘transplanted’ to the South. These USA based financial institutions are responsible for what Ananya Roy (2010) has termed the ‘financialisation of development’ and as Ben Fine (2003) claims are focused on an ‘economic imperative’. This movement to financialisation is part of a wider economic climate of speculative capital and expanding ‘frontiers’ of accumulation. *The Millennium Development Goals* set up by the UN; lay out the “intensions” of global leaders in development:

‘As part of the collective effort to meet the millennium development goals by 2015, the year of microcredit provided an opportunity for the international community to raise awareness about the importance of microfinance in eradicating poverty and to enhance existing programmes that support sustainable, inclusive financial sectors worldwide. In essence, microfinance offers each day that the possibility and hope to many poor people of improving-through their own efforts-their household economic welfare and well-being and enterprise stability and growth’^{xix}

This new model for development espouses the idea that through the ‘democratisation of capital’ poverty can and will be alleviated. Microcredit an invention of Nobel Prize winning economist Mohamed Yunis espouses the belief that ‘credit is a human right’ and Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank has globally exported the idea that free market ideologies, democratic ideas of humanism and philanthropy can co-exist, as Roy explains:

‘This kinder gentler capitalism seeks to aggressively mine the ‘fortune at the bottom of the pyramid’, but in doing so it hopes to eradicate ‘poverty through profits’ (Roy: 2010: 6)

Microfinance is a subprime frontier where development agencies ‘seek out’ new territories as vehicles for the circulation of capital. The global industry of development is now being merged with financial markets as the world’s biggest banks all have microfinance departments of which Roy suggests were unaffected by the 2008 financial crisis. However Roy suggests that this process to financialisation requires ideological work and is not a streamlined process by any means. The poor must be classified and identified for risk before they can become part of the global credit systems and infrastructures of debt retrieval must be created alongside credit in countries with very different laws and value systems. This would suggest that many banks are willing to take risks in lending, and little amount of real assessment is done to identify potential risks to both lenders and borrowers. The reality is often heavy handed debt collection in countries where law enforcement is corrupt and the poor have little or no voice. The employment of credit systems in indigenous or agrarian setting is also troubling as the 2008 sub-prime mortgage crisis illuminates the costs of pawning debt on those who cannot repay the loans. Saskia Sassen (2010) has argued that a similar ‘crisis’ could be replicated in the global South, as debt economies capitalise on emerging middle class in India and China. We are still in a state of ‘recovery’ from the impact of rampant and unchecked fictitious capital, which continues to centralise capital in the hands of a few. Should development practice be employing the very systems that lead to crisis and destitution and should we be re-creating more ‘indebted men’ as Maurizio Lazzarato has argued;

We see that credit does not solicit and exploit labour but rather ethical action and the work of self-constitution at both an individual and collective level.

(Lazzarato:2012: 55)

Global development practice draws on this very ‘ethical action’ through the promotion and distribution of credit, even if some have claimed it a ‘human right’. Lazzarato argues that debt works as a perfect form of control as unlike the labour relation it relies on the individual to discipline him or herself, it is the ultimate ‘subjectification’ of the capital relation of exploitation (Lazzarato: 2012). We must consider this debt relation when thinking about development practice, as not only do we now find individuals as targets through microenterprise but the consciousness of national ‘indebtedness’ has structured the global ‘bail outs’. What of the consciousness of a nation feeling guilt? A nation feeling as if they need to ‘pay back’, this consciousness is being used at present to justify huge reforms in Europe under the label of ‘austerity’. In this instance what is important to consider is that microfinance is about bringing debt to those who have not experienced it before, they exist as a new ‘territory’ for capitalism.

Microfinance is partnered with microenterprise, and both assume a position of individual led development. Western development organizations place emphasis on; productivity, efficiency, competition and marketing ethnicity, all hallmarks of neoliberal enterprise culture. This development is labelled ‘microenterprise’ and any person or business can become an ‘entrepreneur’ it is ‘just in knowing how’. Entrepreneurship is defined as; ‘the need of achievement, risk taking behaviour, tolerance for ambiguity, change minded, initiative, and the need for autonomy’ (Moussetis and Ernst: 2004: 4). The expectation that a below poverty line individual

is to pull themselves out of poverty with no access to structures for reproduction by access to a very small loan which must be paid back at a very high interest has and should be highly criticized. Economist Milford Bateman (2010) has spent years tackling thinkers in development who endorse the ideas behind microfinance and he argues that in pairing microfinance with microenterprise development agencies and banks are drawing on the seductive concept of empowerment. The misconception is that poor individuals are empowered by enterprise, where as Bateman asserts

‘A careful reading of the evidence from economic history undisputedly shows that self employment and microenterprises have most often been promoted as part of the disempowerment of the poor’(Bateman: 2010: 31).

Bateman also states that the promotion of self-employment and enterprise ideology under conservative governments (Thatcher, Reagan) and now under the New Zealand National Government reflects a desire to destabilise organised labour and working class politics. The very basis of capitalism, and accordingly Karl Marx’s (1976) law of capitalist accumulation insist that discrepancies in wealth and monopoly capital are driven by the internal workings of capital and competition. Which consequently mean that the idea of individuals supporting themselves through micro-entrepreneurship and credit is antithetical to capitalist accumulation and bound to fail. ‘Social enterprise’ has become the new buzz word for social businesses, which have in the UK taken on board many roles previously the domain of the state. This outsourcing and the transformation of the social into an economic or business model is reflected across the board from health to education. Social enterprise has become widespread in global development and economist C.K Prahalad has proclaimed that ‘there is fortune at the bottom of the pyramid’ (Prahalad: 2006). This concept

continues to endorse ideologies of accumulation in spaces where social structures of reproduction have broken down. Ironically this 'breaking down' is often a result of the very capitalist expansion that social enterprise seeks to re-replicate.

Neoliberal enterprise culture has not only found home in development schemes but within contemporary art and cultural production. Art theorist Gregory Sholette states that 'enterprise culture requires a kind of enforced creativity that is imposed on all forms of labour' (Sholette: 2011: 36). It requires workers to adapt and think ingeniously in solving problems, skills of innovation, efficiency, competitiveness and resourcefulness are promoted and expected from the contemporary workforce.

Creativity has become an asset to business and the fluidity and flexibility of the cultural worker has been used as a model- while the perks of doing a 'creative' job often mean much less pay. The relationship between cultural production and neoliberal enterprise culture can be understood in two movements; the use of 'creative' work methods and ideas into enterprise thinking, and the need for artists to take on board ideas of entrepreneurship and business in their practice. Angela McRobbie has written on the culture of 'creative industries' (McRobbie: 2011) in the United Kingdom, as part of a wider strategy to make the arts self-funded and commercialise art practice. Sholette states that 'an increasing number of neoliberal theorists speculate that creative work, including artists and art institutions, embody a previously overlooked source of value'(Sholette: 2011: 133) this source of value is found in artists ability to be flexible and creative workers, but also in their existing networks of community. This 'creativity' espoused by Richard Florida (2003) is assumed to be a commodifiable entity that can be nurtured and encouraged in all business. Contemporary artists have taken on board the push towards

entrepreneurialism and the ideas of social enterprise in what we see as the proliferation of art works that have a social function. Social or what has been termed 'relational' practices not only run on ideas of 'outputs' and 'results' but take on board service limitations imposed by neoliberalism^x. Indigenous or alterior groups have become the 'subject' of many art works, and in the group *Dialogue* indigenous Nalpar communities are 'developed' through the construction of water pumps which has become an art work. This relationship represents the complex global flow of ideology and capital. Global North artists employ ideologies of enterprise and change to enact a move towards helping those in a performance reminiscent of development NGOs. Indigenous culture is re-framed through the lens of contemporary art, which is in turn re-framed through the lens of neoliberal enterprise culture.

In the ethnography *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development and the State in Cairo* Julia Elyachar (2005) extends David Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession in relation to the way development under neoliberalism has keyed directly into already existing social systems to accumulate new wealth under the auspice of 'development'. Elyachar studied 'the ways in which networks and social practices of the poor have been incorporated into the market' (Elyachar: 2005: 5) and outlines how a model of neoliberal finance and entrepreneurship was transplanted by United States NGO's to Egypt. Basing her field work in a new industrial suburb of Cairo where 'microentrepreneurs' rubbed shoulders with established craftsmen and workshops Elyachar describes how the difference between the traditional workshop and the new enterprise pointed to wider global incongruence's between a model of the financial market and actual markets on the ground in Cairo.

The ‘discovery’ of the informal economy as a resource for developer to utilise coincided with the creation and use of the term ‘social capital’. A term used to describe the endemic networks and knowledge of ethnic or social groups, of which the poor were seen as ‘wealthy’ in. Elyachar notes that the practices of the poor in their workshops was transformed directly into a source of value for capital through the microenterprise programs in Cairo, development agencies drew on the cultural knowledge or social capital of the poor to initiate new enterprises and distribute debt. Ben Fine has written widely on use of ‘social capital’ in development theory asserting that through a limited analysis it has created a universal out of varied social systems:

“In a nutshell, social capital has been perceived to be applicable to everything from individuals to societies, whether the topic be the sick, the poor, the criminal, the corrupt, the (dys)functional family, schooling, community life..... traditional categories of social theory such as gender, ethnicity and culture become not just a means to social capital....but social capital itself.”(Fine: 2003: 40)

This same predicament is explored in *Microfinance and its Discontents: Woman and Debt in Bangladesh* where Laima Karim (2009) which uncovers the approaches, affect and discourse of microfinance in action in Bangladesh. Karim explains how through microfinance local woman are being used to promote the sale of global phone and food brands and becoming intermeshed into global financial systems of debt. Bangladesh is considered the home of microfinance as the Grameen Bank was the first to set up programs of microcredit in the 1990’s with apparent success which became a blueprint for the now global practice of microfinance. Karim wanted to

find out what the actual change ‘on the ground’ was in Bangladesh after ten years of microfinance. But what Karim found instead was the overbearing presence of NGOs which had established a private government and no real change to living standards for those below the poverty line. What she saw was that microfinance NGOs now provided many state services in connection with their lending programmes, a situation that is repeated in parts of India. The blurring of lines between state and private has meant that NGOs often form partnerships with state apparatuses such as judicial and police forces and can thus harness such powers in the recuperation of debt and the logistical running of communities. The problem of NGO governmentality is that most development programmes use a business or financial ethic, and are concerned with profit not aid, meaning there is little accountability or voice for the borrowers. Karim attests that ‘one did not see material improvements in their lives or in their dwelling quarters’ (Karim: 2009: 81) and some woman Karim spoke to had been involved with microfinance for up to ten years. Those that did benefit were already of a higher class and had access to other funds, and so became a new minority middle class. This ‘subprime’ market in Bangladesh Karim notes is only viable as strong cultural laws are being harnessed by NGOs in recuperating the loans. Karim speaks of the ‘discourse of shame’ being used to make sure people repay loans, ‘shaming’ meaning one’s honour is taken away and can mean being ostracised by the community, consequently it was these methods that the workers of Grameen and BRAC used on defaulting women. If this ‘shaming’ still does not produce a result the police become involved and accounts of brutality enacted by police is widely recorded. The so called ‘democratization of capital’ is represented by loans to those who cannot afford to pay them back due to changes in

circumstances and the extremely high interest rates, these are subsequently “resolved” through seizure of all borrowers assets and intimidation through violence.

Both Roy and Karim recognise the importance in development agendas of the ‘feminization of poverty’(Roy: 2010: 69). This has resulted in the direct targeting of women for microfinance and micro-entrepreneur schemes. Women have become the ‘face’ of microfinance because they are regarded as a safer option as borrowers. The ‘third world woman’ once the face of the ‘victim of the world’ has now become the ‘an icon of indefatigable efficacy and altruism’ (Roy: 2010: 69) used as a mascot for the success of microfinance and woman’s entrepreneurial spirit. Altruism is often mistaken for enterprise as women in microfinance schemes pay themselves very little and work many hours to ‘succeed’ on repaying the loans. The long hours that are required to make many of the traditional art and crafts means that artisans often work the longest hours and gender allocation of certain arts such as weaving has resulted in men running the business part of the operation, leaving women as labourers. Karim found it astonishing when she discovered that of the woman focused schemes in Bangladesh, where loans were only given to women, the reality was that most women actually gave their loans directly to their husbands or male family out of traditional obligations of respect (Karim: 2009). The woman had the responsibility of paying it back but they also had an obligation to their male family and cultural traditions.

Arturo Escobar identifies the ‘making of the third world’ as connected to a regime of visibility and part of this was the ‘visibility’ given to peasants, women and the environment, under the Washington consensus for poverty:

“Let us remember that the apparatus (the dispositif) is an abstract machine that links statements and visibilities, the visible and expressible....Modernity introduced an objectifying regime of visibility- a scopic regime, as it has been called- that, as we will see, dictated the manner in which peasants, woman and the environment were apprehended” (Escobar: 1995: 155)

Microfinance now makes each ‘poor’ individual in the global South, not only able to engage in a system of credit, but a visible individual who is waiting for support, it makes the nameless faceless poor have a name and a number. If we look at the following microcredit organisations: WorldVision, Kiva, Aldea, and Wholeplanet one can find specific people to give credit to, they are made visible and their labour- that which you are paying to support is described. Looking at these images one is made aware of the power of making someone ‘visible’, this visibility represents a kind of control in itself even if it promises ‘freedom’, it emphasises each person as an individual separated from systems of global power relations or from their surrounding community and country that they live. The representation of ‘the poor’ in the global South not only serves to justify specific development practices, it as Roy claims is about quantifying, assessing, counting, and ‘understanding’ the ‘bottom billion’ (Roy: 2010). Development agencies and NGOs are currently ‘assessing’ the poor for risks as potential clients for debt. They are collecting data, ‘mining the bottom billion’, ‘banking the unbanked’. We must consider how technology and credit really ‘democratises’, and ask in what political and historical circumstances does poverty arise, and accordingly what are the political ramifications for representing it.

The use of ‘ethnodevelopment’^{xi} by development NGO’s reflects on the one hand social sciences preoccupation with ‘grassroots’ or cultural centric practices, a preoccupation which James Ferguson (2006) suggests has imposed traditionalism in many African countries. On the other hand ethnodevelopment as practice reflects a western preoccupation with indigenous cultural purity and its subsequent ‘sell - ability’. Robin Eversole discusses the development of different indigenous enterprises in Bolivia by western run NGOs that use indigenous craft as the main focus of their programs. This approach has been popular in countries where indigenous population are deemed “authentic” or “endangered”. Indigenous knowledge and social organisation are appropriated and ‘professionalised’ and feed back into the community as a form of ‘development’. ‘Ethnodevelopment’ assumes that in order to “develop” indigenous communities a neoliberal model of enterprise must be employed and consequently an external market must be found. In many cases this global “market” can affect the production of art and craft, and the social organisation of indigenous groups. What is significant about ‘art’ as a tool for development and potentially why it is so popular as an enterprise option is that it represents an immediate ‘solution’ not only economically for the producers, but the image it presents for the western consumers. The costs of setting up an artisan enterprise is often low and can take place in the home, and involves using family members as labourers, a critique made by Timothy Scarse (2003) is that this represents a further ‘domestication’ of labour, with many women working for these ‘enterprises’ unpaid. It means that there are no infrastructural costs in setting up a factory, and so in terms of ‘development’ it is an easy ‘hands off’ solution.

In Sucre Bolivia ASUR an NGO was set up to bring 'back' traditional weaving to the local producers after mining closures created many ghettoised communities, Leslie Gill (1997) explains that their indigenous identity was used as a tool to 're-develop' their early skills. Here we can see how tradition and ethnicity are used as tools in development to reintroduce 'heritage' to a people who have 'lost the art' of weaving, it implies a knowledge of tradition on the part of the NGO, and locates the weavers actions only in relation to a wider discourse of tradition and thus authenticity and then marketability. Timothy Scrase's (2003) research into indigenous cultural producers has found that most live in situations of precarity and substitute their income with small scale farming. Edwin Wade notes how 'philanthropist sponsors' in the 1930s helped to 'save Native American art from ruination at the hands of commercial traders' (Wade: 1990: 176) by setting up museums and fairs where the work could be shown. The rhetoric and ideology however of 'saving' a culture is ethically and politically dubious. Wade states that although it began in the Native American's 'best interest' it soon became about presenting them to the world and to tourists as a spectacle and 'heritage worth preserving'. This discourse of heritage went as far to teach Hopi artists the ancient ceramic designs from archaeological finds, showing how 'heritage' can be used directly as a social tool for 'improvement' and an imposed form a deskilling that moves indigenous artists further away from technological means of production to the handmade. Although a similar history is witnessed in the Maori renaissance an internal drive to re-educate is very different from an external imposition. However the long term repercussions of the Maori drive for sovereignty has become problematic once it is situated within a neoliberal agenda and one could say that the streamlined Maori image that the New Zealand tourist

board and places like Te Puia represent masks over the current political economic circumstances of many Maori.

The relationship between tourism and Maori culture reflects many of the layered problems encountered in using culture for profit and the symbolic appropriation of culture for national image. Margaret Werry (2011) has argued that the New Zealand government's 'use' of Maori culture in the tourist industry reflects a desire to project an image of multiculturalism which seeks to mystify the historical conflict and contemporary problems faced by New Zealand Maori. A similar relationship is witnessed in Canada where First Nation Americans are used as national symbols but as Marc James Leger (2012) has argued do not fit the profile of 'necessary' culture as their national television station was cut during the global recession:

'We can therefore understand creative industries policies in relation to the current form of contemporary neoliberal governance, which seeks to maximise profits by making unproductive labour more 'productive' (Leger: 2011: 566)

If art and culture are judged by profit there is no space for contestation or dissent. It is in spaces where artists are able to question and deconstruct ideas that new cultural contributions are made. If neoliberal governments restrict funding to profitable culture we are running the risk of art as commerce or worse art as propaganda. New Zealand's Maori Television not only allows a platform for Te Reo Maori but a non-commercialised space where alternative culture is shown. In cutting the First Nation's television station the Canadian government is no longer allowing First Nation peoples to represent themselves but only to be represented.

In Lesley Gill's (1997) study of NGO led Bolivian woman's craft co-operative Gill explains how the inclusive project which had the aim of bringing woman together to empower them through making and selling crafts failed to succeed. Gill explains that the discrepancies between ideologies of competition and co-operation worked against the co-operative and development objectives. Micro-lending helped woman to set up workshops and education programs helped 'improve' the quality of manufacturing techniques, business enterprise skills were taught and focused on marketing, efficiency in production, creativity and competition. What was not anticipated was that combining the ethos of a co-operative with that of enterprise and competition was antithetical. The woman would not 'spread' the word about the collective and work together as it would impede their access to a limited supply of buyers, meaning access to 'development' was to a small few, which exacerbates conflict within the communities themselves. Frederick Wherry explains the transition from peasant to cultural producer in Costa Rica as problematic because;

'Not only are the former agricultural workers being pushed out of farm, factory, and protected government employment while nonetheless being pulled into handicraft production and tourist services, but also both the workers and the capitalists "see" the production of some types of cultural commodities as a means to protect cultural traditions and to validate a favourable public identity narrative for themselves'
(Wherry: 2007: 220)

In this way cultural labour is harnessed directly into constructing an image of place and presenting a way of life for tourists, in the face of devastating policy changes that directly affect indigenous people's way of life. The clever apparatus of the

tourism industry as a “developer” is that it opens up the field to international investment and aid, which is then directed into tourist ventures, which do not engender sustainable livelihoods but seasonal precarity for local communities. Tourism is unable to provide indigenous communities with equal opportunities as it is based around ideas of market entrepreneurship and competition, which are always premised on favouring individuals. This is before we even begin to address ideas such as ‘disaster tourism’(Klein: 2007) and gentrification (Smith: 2002). The relationship between indigenous cultural producers and global circulation can be characterised by two movements; the export of ideas of the ‘free market’, and enterprise culture itself to cultural producers, and the import of cultural goods and ‘identities’ into market circulation and art worlds. The role of tourism in this exchange cannot be underestimated as it is through travel and leisure that ‘developing’ countries can ‘gain’ revenue and western consumers come into direct contact with producers in the global South. Brian Burke in his research with indigenous Amazon tribes states that:

‘Exotic myths about indigenous people have such power that NGOs and corporations have not left the strategic deployment of culture to indigenous people themselves. Rather, they seek out associations with indigenous people in order to cash in on this symbolic capital’ (Burke: 2010: 31)

Western development organizations place emphasis on; productivity, efficiency, competition and marketing ethnicity, all hallmarks of neoliberal enterprise culture. Robyn Eversole’s (Eversole: 2003) research with Bolivian ‘microentrepreneurs’ notes that most exist at a ‘subsistence’ level and never accumulate a profit or get

return on capital. Most artisanal entrepreneurs in the global South are both labourers and managers, and can be seen more as ‘petty commodity’ producers than entrepreneurs. But the key issue at hand is that while a model of capitalism is being ‘delivered’ through many development and government schemes, those in situations of poverty are not willing to ‘take risks’ in investing their capital as it provides a much needed subsistence economy. This is where ‘microfinance’ steps in and ‘provides’ the funds to invest, but consequently most spend their loans on staples like food and fuel not in ‘growing’ their capital. The transplantation of ‘enterprise’ culture into indigenous economies is at best symbolic, and to move producers from subsistence farming to high end entrepreneurship requires more than ideological stimulation and miniscule loans. What is not addressed in many development schemes which work ideas of enterprise is that the infrastructures on which petty commodity producers in the global North rely are missing in the global South. Ha-Joon Chang (2010) emphasises how much harder it is to do business in the global South without basic necessities such as roads or transport.

The expansion of ‘art worlds’ into indigenous communities cannot be underestimated. The highly stratified and competitive ‘art worlds’ (Becker: 2008) of the global North directly contradict many indigenous practices of art and craft. The distinction of artist/craftsperson/worker has functioned to construct hierarchies within cultural production and contradicts the place of cultural production as lived experienced for many indigenous communities. The creation of indigenous ‘artists’ has coincided with neoliberalism and while many contemporary indigenous artists use art as a platform for expression the transition from art as collective culture to exhibited individual culture is punctuated with many dilemmas. Fred Myers has

explained how the practice of acrylic painting in Australia re-conceptualised the practice and objectives of Aboriginal art and situating it within the discourse of abstract painting (Myers: 1991). This inadvertently enabled the stratifying of pricing and nurturing of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu: 1984).

In *An Ethnography of Neoliberalism* Rudi Colledero-Mansfield sets out to provide a model of how local cultural producers in Ecuador have responded to neoliberalism 'positively'. He sees the role of 'competition' working to 'consolidate cultural identities and community commitments' (Colledero-Mansfield: 2002: 114), even though it 'produces sharp differences in material wellbeing' (ibid). Competition can be seen as a major component in enterprise culture, Marx theorised competition as one of the laws of capitalist production to increase productivity and its use in liberal economies and entrepreneurial culture has been to reinforce the agency of the individual and his power to achieve over his/her competitors in a culture that ultimately rewards individualism over any collective forms of organization. The growth of artisanal communities in Central and South America represents the collapse of many subsistence forms of living, often brought about by 'dispossession' of land and migrations to 'centres' and the 'growth' of the Tigua and Otavalo artisan communities can be seen as a response to such changes (ibid: 115).

Colledero-Mansfield explains that artisans in Tigua started producing symbolist paintings in the 1970s, which draw on local folk traditions and iconography. And in Otavalo, a small migrant town, residents pioneered the 'mass production' of woven belts as an economic strategy. Both communities now have distinguishable stratification in their roles, earnings and 'cultural capital'. The nurturing of 'art stars'

has meant that those at the ‘bottom’ in the weaving communities earn an eighth of those at the ‘top’ and of the painters 60% were on Ecuadorian minimum wage while the few ‘art stars’ earned 100% more than that. This culture of unequal development has fostered the creation of a culture of ‘bosses’ and ‘managers’. Indigenous forms of art production do not ‘threaten’ neoliberal policies but become enveloped within them and competition is not ‘embraced willingly’ by the communities but imposed on them by changes in neoliberal economic policy.

The same conditions of ‘competition’ can be seen as motivating a change in the art and artists of the Pacific Island of Rarotonga. Katherine Giuffre’s (2009) ethnography *Collective Creativity: Art and Society in the South Pacific*⁷⁰¹ surmises that the introduction of a western art world model created cultures of competition and enterprise in this small island community. Giuffre witnessed an ‘art explosion’ as many locals and returning expatriates all started to make art spurred on by tourist dollars entering the market. Before the 2000s local art had been dominated by traditional craft production that was based on indigenous styles and cultural needs, much of the tivaevae (sewn quilt) and carving was done collectively and was used mainly for festivals, performances and as gifts, with a small amount entering the tourist market. After the influx of cruise ships, package holidays and most significantly Cook islanders that had been schooled in New Zealand an ‘art world’ started to emerge and the role of competition facilitated the growth of ‘art stars’ (Giuffre: 2009: 55) as we saw in Ecuador.

⁷⁰¹ Giuffre. K, *Collective Creativity: Art and Society in the South Pacific*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009

Giuffre highlights the importance of the transformation from craft to ‘fine art’ production and uses Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital to explain how local artists and galleries created hierarchies and distinctions between arts that were once considered inseparable from the traditional culture. She also carefully explains how competition between the artists as opposed to collectivity help stratify the group of artists and create a small pool of ‘art stars’ at the top, while most still sold their art at markets and directly to tourists. Competition spurred on production on the island, as locals saw the financial success of some artists and decided to ‘give it a go’. Once a core group of successful artists (Giuffre notes this was based mainly on actual earnings) was established, each fought for a place in the hierarchy of this small island. Competition and as Giuffre explains ‘harmful gossip’ (Giuffre: 2009: 75) is not accepted or encouraged within Polynesian values of sharing, collectivity, shame and humbleness. So this new field of competitive ‘art stars’ had to navigate between traditional ideas of community, and new ideas of competition. This case study shows that not only can culture be co-opted into neoliberal enterprise culture, but once this model is in place it can cement inequalities within the community.

This paper has focused on examples where indigenous culture has been co-opted or the ways that development has become ensconced with neoliberal ideology, accordingly it has not explored the ways that indigenous culture and community can and has been harnessed as a force of resistance and change. It is important however to identify the points at which we are subsumed by capital, as it enables us to identify the points at which we may resist. Consequently indigenous culture has provided the backbone for many important global struggles. Currently the Zapatista draw on indigenous cultural knowledge and community in their fight against the Mexican

state, and 'Maoist Rebels' in Chhattisgarh fight on a daily basis to maintain their life in the forests of northern India. However the potency of struggles witnessed in the post-colonial period has seen a steady decline in recent years, from the Panther movements to the national Socialist movements in Africa. The co-opting of indigenous groups has also been the subject of critique by theorists who claim that neoliberal and western led organisations tap into indigenous subjects in an effort to gain support. Petras and Veltmer are critical of Eva Morales' (2010) 'incorporation' of indigenous communities in Bolivia, as they see the manufacturing of an indigenous bourgeoisie and Jeff Corntassel (2007) questions the efficacy of 'inclusion' of indigenous rights in UN policy. This analysis is by no means 'top down' but has focused in the imposition of forces under neoliberalism, rather than their resistance and agency of indigenous peoples. The reason for this being that in focusing on the 'positives' of neoliberalism and the resistances it creates we fall back into the post-colonial trap of celebrating alterity and ignoring hegemony. In saying this there is still space and possibility for indigenous led resistance movements in both the global North and South. Indigenous cultural production is an important site for renewing cultural identity and speculating cultural efficacy, rather than providing an image and objects for sale.

By identifying the ways in which new forms of development are co-opted by capitalist forms of control and accumulation we illuminate a seemingly benign world of NGO's, development schemes and charities. These new territories have real affects on the lives of global South and indigenous subjects. In identifying the points at which indigenous communities are used as sites of extraction in the form of subprime loans and national cultural signifiers, we open up new questions about the

apparatus of development. If we are to ‘keep’ culture as a separate sphere from the market we must constantly resist and negotiate with the ways in which it is complicit with neoliberal ideology. Art and culture represent a new territory for accumulation in the ‘subjectification’ of capital, and spaces where ‘culture’ still has value outside of the market are particularly vulnerable. For this reason the co-opting of indigenous culture by neoliberalism must be continue to be contested.

ⁱ For a discussion of this see Wendy Larnier and Maria Butler (2007)

ⁱⁱ See Lazarus. N, (2002) ‘The Fetish of the ‘West’ In Post-Colonial Theory’ in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, , Edited by Neil Lazarus and Crystal Bartolovich Cambridge University Press

ⁱⁱⁱ For a discussion see David Harvey (2003) and Saskia Sassen (2010)

^{iv} See Karl Marx (1976) in the final section of capital where he explains the theory of the original or ‘primitive accumulation’

^v For a discussion on the state’s ‘roll back’ See Peck and Tickell (2002)

^{vi} For a discussion on art and labour and ‘deskilling’ see John Roberts (2007) and Harry Braverman (1998)

^{vii} See Walter Benjamin ‘Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’

^{viii} See MacCannell (1973) ‘Staged Authenticity’

^{ix} Taken from webpage ‘Directory of Development Organisation’ (2011)
<http://www.devdir.org/index.html>

^x For a discussion see Claire Bishop (2012) *Artificial Hells*

^{xi} See Nina Laurie, Robert Andolina, and Sarah Radcliffe (2005), *Ethnodevelopment: Social Movements, Creating Experts and Professionalising Indigenous Knowledge in Ecuador*, in *Antipode* Volume 37, Issue 3

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